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LESSON SYSTEM;

THE STORY OF ITS ORIGIN
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THE LESSON SYSTEM:

FOR THE SCHOOLS OF THE

THE STORY OF ITS ORIGIN AND INAUGURATION.

BY SIMEON GILBERT,

Editor of "The Advance."



NEW YORK:
PHILLIPS & HUNT.

CINCINNATI:
HITCHCOCK & WALDEN,

1879.

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THE LESSON SYSTEM.

ITS ORIGIN.

THE adoption of the Uniform Lesson System by the Sunday-schools of the country, in 1872, will mark a distinct epoch in Church history. That this is no extravagant statement will appear from what follows.

It was an event equally notable as marking the progress that had already been reached, rendering its adoption possible, and as making possible the immense progress in Bible study which swiftly followed, the wide-reaching influence of which is only now fairly begun.

The new movement was strikingly opportune. It came as something that had been waited and hoped for. It could not have appeared earlier than it did, because the way had not been prepared for it; it certainly did not come a day too soon. The Churches needed it for their own sake. They also needed it in order to the legitimate forth-putting of their proper influence upon the world about them. The spirit and progressive methods of true scientific inquiry—disposed to face fairly all facts, classify all its knowledges, and examine minutely the parts, but estimate them rationally with a view to their relations as a whole—were beginning imperatively to demand that some worthier methods of Bible study and

of religious teaching should be pursued in the Sunday-school. Here, too, the malaria of morbid doubt was abroad on every side, and must, somehow, be effectively met. Moreover, the strong drift toward extreme secularism in our public school systems was ominous of disaster to society, unless some other instrumentality, immeasurably reinforced, should come forward to do what manifestly the secular schemes of popular education either could not, or would not be allowed to do.

The combination of influences which brought about the Uniform Lesson System, making its adoption practicable, and thus making its large experiment successful, has a distinctly defined history. That history has never yet been written. An accurate and authentic story of how this grand idea came to be entertained, and to be put in operation, must furnish, I have thought, a chapter of religious history of both present and enduring interest.

THE SCHEME NOT AN ABRUPT RESULT.

First, it is to be noted that the scheme did not spring into idea and operation abruptly. It was like all vital products—something subject to the law which our modern scientists are pleased to call struggle for existence, natural selection, and survival of the fittest. And, of course, it is presupposed that God himself is the prime inspirer of all good thoughts, as of all holy affections.

The Sunday-school itself is only a recent institution; we must wait a year or two yet before we can celebrate its first centennial. By common consent Robert Raikes is accounted the founder of the modern Sunday-school. But, perhaps, it would be more appropriate to say that he was the *finder* of it. But what, precisely, did he find? He found a want, a

supply, a time and a practicable agency for bringing the want and the supply together. He found an existing destitution of moral instruction and religious influences, such as stirred in his generous soul the profoundest pity. He found a day as old as the traditions of a paradise, a remedy as old as Christianity; he found Churches indoctrinating with some carefulness their catechumens—the children of religious parents, training more or less faithfully their own children at home; but he found whole streets full of children, girt about by ignorance and vice, poverty and rags, wholly exposed to all the worst influences that were abroad. He found, one Sabbath day, as he walked the streets of Gloucester, a sight that touched his heart irresistibly, and at once a voice—was it not from God?—bidding him “*try*” what could be done. He found certain others, notably certain women, as ready as himself to make trial of the thought which had so seized and possessed him. He found a newspaper, happily his own, and so at his disposal, through which to proclaim and explain and recommend what he had found and successfully tried. He found a state of mind prevailing among earnest Christians in all parts of the kingdom, quick to accept the divinely given hint and to take up practically the great idea, the new scheme. He found a diamond in the rough, infinitely more precious than he knew; but he guessed faintly its worth, and, like one possessed by a thought mightier than himself, began telling of it to others, until they, too, caught the contagion of it, and began doing more than he himself had dared hope could be done. It may be impossible to ascertain across whose mind the thought first flitted, of the possibility of gathering the great masses of children into strictly religious public schools on Sundays; and we know

that there were various other private mission-school enterprises started, here and there, about the same time, some of them, perhaps, even earlier than this of Mr. Raikes. But, as Sydney Smith has remarked, "He is not the inventor who first *says* the thing, but he who says it so long, loud, and clearly that he compels mankind to hear him." And thus it is, I think, that we have all been right in according to Robert Raikes the unique honor of having been chosen of God to be the inventor and founder of the general system or institution of Sunday Bible instruction which has grown into the Sunday-school.*

The modern Sunday-school, however, has had a birth and a new birth. If you say it had its birth in the heart and brain of Robert Raikes, no one familiar with the facts will hesitate to say that the Sunday-school idea has had its second birth in the inventive, foreseeing, resourceful brain and heart of John H. Vincent, and the impetuous heart and will indomitable of B. F. Jacobs. Gloucester, England, and Chicago,

* Dr. Vincent, in a lecture on "The Church of the Future," in 1875, said: "An aged Christian was in the habit of saying, 'I thank God for three things:

" '1. That I am what I am;

" '2. That I am not what I once was;

" '3. That what I now am I shall not always be.'"

Rev. W. F. Crafts, quoting the above in his book on the "Ideal Sunday-School," adds: "We thank the divine Founder of the Sunday-school that 'it is not what it was' in its beginning—merely a school for ragged children, itself as ragged as its scholars, manned by teachers whose services were secured by money rather than love of souls, and working only in the narrow realm bounded on the one side by childhood, and on the other by rags, including none but the poor, and none of the poor but the children. We thank God, also, that the Sunday-school is 'what it is'—a Bible school for *all* children, rich or ragged, and rapidly outgrowing the strange idea that it is merely a 'children's institution.' We thank God, most of all, that the Sunday-school is 'NOT WHAT IT SHALL BE,' that it has not yet considered itself full-grown, and ceased to look forward."

are the two cities where these two successive ideas—more than revolutionary in their force and scope—first found birth-place and opportunity.

ANTICIPATORY BEGINNINGS.

To find the very beginning of the beginnings is usually a difficult thing to do—often quite impossible. There are always reformers before the reformation. If there be no such fact as the transmigration of souls, there is a very real sort of transmigration of ideas, that seem to pass from one form to another in ever-increased maturity and power. No seed grows and ripens in a day. The roots of that which blossomed into fairest flower and ripened into richest fruit in one generation had struck downward, and reached back far into the period that went before it.

The history of Sunday-schools during the first sixty years of our century can hardly be called, intellectually at least, brilliant. There was enterprise, but it groped dubiously, wildly, tentatively. It was slow of heart to see the things that are better. It was too uninventive.

Certain classes in certain schools, here and there, were taught with as clear a sense of the unity of all Scripture, with as fine a sense for relationship, as large consecution of method—in short, with as true an eye to system—as has been exhibited since. If I may be allowed to say it—and I speak not merely with a touch of filial pride, but in soberness of judgment—my mother, who taught the adult Bible-class for ladies in her Church for over fifty years, shaping the intellectual and religious characteristics of two generations, and visibly affecting the character of the whole community, was wont to open the Scriptures to her class with a more perspic-

uous insight into the scheme of the great redemptive revelation and history as a totality and a unity, with a more masterly grasp and power of lucid exposition of God's own lesson system running through the ages, through all the ages, than I have ever known, in Sunday-school or out of it. And so our appreciation of attempted systems, latest in order of time, ought not to make us insensible to the grand things done, on this side and on that, by those who came before us. Some of the question books—I do not say all, but some of them—prepared by sagacious and scholarly men twenty, thirty, even forty years ago, clearly reveal the incipient working of that genius for systematization in Scripture study which prepared the way for that which now we see, and in which we all rejoice.

PARTIAL APPROACHES AND PREPARATIONS.

Moreover, in looking for the beginnings of this most fruitful idea, it would be an oversight, in passing, not to notice the preparations for it, and partial approaches toward it, made by the formation of those undenominational and national union benevolent organizations, like that of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Tract Society, the American Bible Society, the American Home Missionary Society, the American Sunday-School Union, the International Evangelical Alliance, and, by no means least, the Christian Commission during our late war. These, and other similar associations, indicate the widening consciousness of Christian brotherhood, and the deepening passion for unity, fellowship, co-operation, and concentration, which, like spring-tide rivers when they overflow the old channels and flood the valleys, make nearly invisible the

petty hedgerows of selfish isolation. And then it should also be said, the publications of the American Sunday-School Union, particularly its series of "Union Question Books," though sometimes of only questionable excellence, did at best coast along within occasional sight of the idea, and furnish some helpful hints looking toward it, though without ever distinctly desecrating it. For one thing, at least, they helped to get the minds of the people used to the thought of popular, united Bible study and Christian enterprise, irrespective of sectarian divisive lines.

THE "LIMITED LESSON SCHEME."

The "Limited Lesson Scheme" of 1825 deserves, also, to be mentioned in this connection. Previously, as, indeed, also, subsequently, the unlimited *memorizing* of Scripture verses was the practice in vogue, amounting to a positive mania, such as now appears almost incredible. But as Churches had not wholly lost their wits, a vehement reaction after awhile set in. Advocates appeared of "limited lessons." A scheme of "Select Scripture Lessons for Sunday-Schools" was published on cards, and somewhat widely circulated. In 1826 the committee of the New York Sunday-School Union reported, warmly approving of the "Selected Lessons," and urging their general adoption. This scheme evidently contemplated a course of lessons running through several years and covering a wide range of Scripture. This limited lesson method was successfully tried in many schools in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Albany. Rev. Albert Judson was, in 1826, engaged to prepare a monthly series of questions on the lessons for the use of teachers. The following year Mr. Judson published a question *book*, designed, as he stated,

as "a first annual course of instruction." The American Sunday-School Union earnestly indorsed the plan; and two years later it was stated that "the Selected Lessons are now almost universally introduced." It contemplated a five years' course of Bible study, "a series of courses intended to be published yearly, each course to consist of forty lessons," the whole to "include the principal facts and truths of the Bible." It was claimed for it, as one grand advantage, that, instead of the utter confusion of the previous method, this plan required "every class to receive instruction on the same lesson at the same time." The "American Sunday-School Magazine" of that period said of it: "The introduction of that system of Sabbath-school instruction which has obtained the appellation of the 'Selected Lessons' formed a new era in their history. It has been found so superior in every respect to the old plan of allowing and encouraging every child to commit as many chapters or verses for a lesson as he could, and each scholar a different lesson, that the latter is now exploded from every well-conducted Sunday-school, and all now have the *same*, and that a *limited*, portion of Scripture to study, understand, and commit to memory."

INVENTIONS MORE THAN FRAGMENTARY GUESSES.

But the most sagacious and fruitful hints do not always gain immediate currency. It frequently happens that, even after they have been distinctly announced, they lie in fallow neglect for a long while, until some practical genius, with the rarely-gifted "vision and faculty," born into more propitious times, takes them up, expands and defines them, applies them, and compels the world to take note of and accept them. This was remarkably the case in respect to the real genesis of

the International Uniform System of Lessons, as now in use.

Real discoveries are something more than transient guesses, even as great inventions imply something more than mere discoveries. Now, the present Uniform Lesson was both a discovery and an invention; and more than one man's inventive brain and forceful heart had a forming hand in the matter. The original thought of it, as something desirable, timely, and practicable, was of the nature of a discovery, as the finding out of ways and means for putting the idea into effect must be reckoned among the most useful of modern inventions.

As intimated above, the law of discovery is itself not always easy to discover. Take the instance of the discovery of modern anæsthesia. For nearly half a century, from Sir Humphrey Davy to Dr. Morton, the scientific world had been familiar with a suggestion, and had as constantly rejected it—a suggestion which, as Dr. E. H. Clark remarks, if accepted, might, at any time, have proved, as it afterward did, “the greatest single step ever made in the progress of the art of medicine.” Drs. Wells, Jackson, and Morton, have each claimed the discovery. The three men had been somewhat intimately associated together, and at times had all had their attention turned to a search after some form of painless dentistry. Dr. Wells experimented awhile, but gave it up, in disgust at his failure. Dr. Jackson made a pregnant suggestion, which Dr. Morton took, and from which he got a further hint of his own. Dr. Jackson made *a* suggestion; he did not make *the* suggestion. Dr. Morton, under stress of a particular emergency, eagerly taking up the imperfect knowledge and the unverified hints of others, respecting the

anæsthetic power of certain liquids, gases, and vapors, seized hold of them, and by a series of bold, and at the time deemed reckless, experimentation, added to the knowledge and random guesses of others, until, in a moment of happy inspiration, he began to turn that knowledge to hitherto unthought-of uses.

Vague wishes and stray suspicions do not constitute discovery. That which to one appears a chimera, or to another a bare possibility, to still another is of the nature of a prophetic certainty; and if this one have the impulse, the persistence, the force and perseverance, enough to elaborate and perfect the knowledge and make it generally useful, he is the one who becomes the true discoverer. How, then, did this idea of a Uniform International Lesson System come to be apprehended? and how did it get to be the great fact, the wide, sweet, magnificent force, that it is?

Discovery and invention move forward hand in hand. Some new principle, fact, or law is discovered; then some way, means, or instrumentality, by which this new principle may be practically applied, is invented. A felt necessity is generally the mother of invention; but people are apt to be late in perceiving the real urgency of a necessity, and then astonishingly slow to believe in the practicability of any suggested method for meeting the great exigency. At all events, this was the case with the Church in its late and gradual approaches toward the true methods of systematized popular Bible study and religious training.

STAGES IN THE PROGRESS.

Without caring to go farther back than Robert Raikes, a little less than a hundred years ago, we find him (1) starting

a school, and urging the general establishment of other schools, *for children on Sunday*; not very religious certainly at first, but meant to be as religious as they could conveniently be made. These were, strictly speaking, mission schools. Then (2) we find springing up here and there, in England and in America, a system of Bible schools on Sunday, for children and *some* older persons. Then followed (3) the era of *memorizing* Bible verses. By this time the Sunday-school was becoming also the Church-school. After awhile there began to prevail a deep dissatisfaction with the chaotic, no-plan, no-aim way of Sunday-school instruction. A variety of experiments toward some kind of study that should be definite, methodical, consecutive, were tried. The subject of popular education was attracting general attention. The science of education had received a mighty impulse. Men of genius, like Pestalozzi, Froebel, and a few others, had discovered childhood. It appeared to be a new kingdom of transcendent interests. There were some noble enthusiasts in the investigation of it. The discovery of its natural bounds and resources, and its normal methods of development, began a thorough revolution in the schemes of popular education in the secular primary schools. Horace Mann must be mentioned as prominent in that transition period. The effect of all this upon the Sunday-school was after awhile felt. What was termed (4) the "Limited Lesson Plan" was one of the immediate consequences. Another concomitant (5) was the National Sunday-School Union effort, as a primary form of home missionary enterprise. Following this, in orderly sequence, were, (6) the Convention movement; (7) the Institute movement; (8) the development of a higher order of Sunday-school periodical literature; (9) Dr. Vincent's "Lesson Plan" and "Lesson

Paper ;" (10) the success of the Chicago and Berean Series ; (11) Mr. B. F. Jacobs' conception of the idea and *purpose* of making some lesson plan *uniform*—not for one locality, or one denomination merely, but for the nation. This being done, (12) the immediate purpose of the Lessons Committee, at the suggestion of Dr. Vincent, was formed, to endeavor to make the new uniform lesson system *international*. Dr. Vincent, who had two or three years before been in correspondence with the London Sunday-School Union, urging the adoption of some international course of lessons, being on the point of visiting England, (1872,) was authorized to invite the co-operation of the London Committee in our proposed scheme of lessons. In carrying out this mission he was successful, leading Sunday-school men of Great Britain evincing the heartiest interest in the project.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL CONVENTIONS.

The first National Sunday-School Convention was held in New York, October, 1832. Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen was chosen moderator. Previous to this meeting a list of questions was prepared, and some twenty-five hundred copies distributed through the land. When the replies were collected they made a volume of two thousand and four hundred pages. Among the significant topics were questions relating to organization, discipline, visiting, modes of instruction, union question books, libraries, adult classes, superintendents, and other similar points. The second National Convention was held in Philadelphia, in May, 1833. Gerrit Smith was one of its vice-presidents. The third was held in Philadelphia in 1859 ; the fourth, in Newark, N. J., in 1869 ; the fifth, in Indianapolis, in 1872 ; the sixth in Baltimore, Md.,

in 1875 ; the seventh in Atlanta, Ga., in 1878. The last two named are known as "International Conventions."

But of no less importance were the State and County Sunday-School Conventions. The New York State Convention was formed in 1854. These local conventions exerted great influence. First of all, they served to generate immense enthusiasm. They were in the highest degree delightful. The surprise was equal to the joy when these representatives from all the sects discovered how completely their hearts were at one on the Sunday-school platform. As the revered and loved Dr. Tyng remarked at one of these:

In every countenance before me I see the reflection of love, and kindness, and fellowship, and mutual sympathy and regard. I stand in the midst of an assembly as united as any assembly ever can be upon earth, and never, until I reach that higher world where all have but one mind, because there is but one mind to rule in all, shall I find more entire fellowship of feeling, unity of sentiment, sympathy of experience, and grateful co-operation in effort.

How essential the unsectarian gatherings of this sort were in preparing the way for the later Uniform Lesson movement it is easy to see.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL INSTITUTE.

It is not easy, at this time, to realize fully how void of any well-matured method, and system generally, were the Sunday-schools of the country—say twenty years ago. And yet, even then, there were not a few men who had vision enough to see what was needed, even if they could not conjecture how to bring it about. There are always some who are not enslaved to either the traditions of the past or the customs of the present. Of this sort were the prime movers in the Institute movement in the United States.

The Sunday-School Institute was a kind of temporary Sunday-school *normal school*. The idea of it was borrowed—tardily, it must be confessed—from the “Teachers’ Institutes” connected with the secular public schools. As early as 1837 Dr. W. E. Channing, of Boston, in a memorable address, had made the following strikingly sagacious declaration respecting a want in the secular schools:—

We need an institution for the formation of better teachers, and until this step is taken we can make no important progress. The most crying want in this commonwealth is the want of accomplished teachers. We boast of our schools, but our schools do comparatively little for want of educated instructors. Without good teaching a school is but a name. An institution for training men to train the young would be a fountain of living waters, sending forth streams to refresh present and future ages. As yet our legislators have denied to the poor and laboring classes this principal means of their elevation. We trust they will not always prove blind to the highest interests of the State. We want better teachers and more teachers for all classes of society—for rich and poor, for children and adults. One of the surest signs of the regeneration of society will be the elevation of the art of teaching to the highest rank in the community. . . . Socrates is now regarded as the greatest man in an age of great men. The name of *king* has grown dim before that of *apostle*. To teach, whether by word or action, is the highest function on earth.

To meet this want, so deeply felt by some, Teachers’ Institutes, for teachers in the public schools, soon after began to be held. Mr. Barnard, who was especially prominent in originating and conducting them, thus describes what such an organization was:—

A Teachers’ Institute is a gathering of teachers—old and young, experienced and inexperienced, of both sexes and of schools of different grades—in such number as will develop the sympathies and power of a common pursuit, and yet not so large as to exclude the freedom of individual action; for a period of time long enough to admit of a systematic

plan of operations, and yet not so protracted as to prove a burdensome expense, or an interruption to other engagements; under the direction of men whose only claim to respect and continued attention must be their experience and acknowledged success in the subjects assigned them, and in a course of instruction at once theoretical and practical, combined with opportunities of inquiry, discussion, and familiar conversation.

But pastors and Sunday-school people were slow to note the analogy between the Sunday-school and the day-school. The most crying want was still the want of accomplished teachers, educated instructors, in the Sunday-school—men and women instructed, *trained for their work*. But as early as 1847 I find that Rev. Dr. D. P. Kidder, then Corresponding Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday-School Union, in his annual report, strongly urged the formation of “Normal Sunday-schools.” Referring to the Teachers’ Institutes, organized for the purpose of training and qualifying teachers for the secular schools, he pertinently declared that such meetings “give occasion to ask why Sunday-school teachers might not have similar means of improvement.” “Even if *all* the teachers of a district could not meet during a sufficient length of time to take a complete series of lessons on the best methods of Sunday-school instruction, those who could, if representatives of the different schools, might return and impart the knowledge they had received to their several associates.” The next year he renewed his appeal, but without much hope of its being heeded. “We confess, however, that we fear the day is distant when the Church will take as high ground on this subject as that already assumed by several States of this Union, namely, that in order to promote general education most effectually institutions must be provided for the special instruction and training of teachers.”

This wise hint was one of the greatest importance, and urgency, even ; but it went unheeded. But in 1857 Rev. J. H. Vincent, then pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Joliet, Illinois, organized what he called a "Normal Class" in his own Church.

At the Rock River Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Chicago, in October, 1860, the Conference Sunday-school Committee, at the suggestion of Mr. Vincent, reported as follows:—

The importance of Teachers' Institutes to the educational interests of the country cannot have escaped your attention. May we not profitably introduce something similar among us? Such an institute, conducted by our ablest Sunday-school educators, could not fail to elevate our standard, and improve our system of religious culture.

This report was unanimously adopted by the Conference.

At the Galena District Convention, held in Freeport, Illinois, April 16, 1861, the question was proposed and discussed, "How may we carry out the suggestion of our Conference Sunday-school Committee relative to the Sunday-school Teachers' Institute?"

A constitution was adopted, and, at the same session of the District Convention, an excellent Institute programme was carried out. This was the first Sunday-school Institute ever held. Mr. Vincent was made President of the Galena District Institute, and sub-district sessions were held in several places during 1861, with practical normal drills, good attendance, and great enthusiasm. In 1862 Mr. Vincent secured the organization of a similar Institute on the Rockford District. Other Institutes followed in other places soon after.

On November 17th, 1864, Mr. Vincent read an elaborate

paper before the Cook County Sunday-school Teachers' Convention, in Chicago, on "A Permanent Sunday-school Teachers' Institute for the North-west." "What we want," he urged,

is to lift up before all the schools and the teachers *a regular system of teacher-training*: not merely to provide a printed outline of studies, but to organize a class for the training of teachers, to which certain persons shall be admitted, and which shall serve as a public model of what ought to be done in every school, and just how it ought to be done. One such model class, or institute, or normal school, in a city like Chicago, would do more in one year toward attracting attention to the important subject of training, and of prescribing the practicable plan for securing training every-where, than twenty conventions a year, with all the talking and discussing incident to such convocations. Such a class, permanently organized, could bring to its aid the best talent of our pulpits, colleges, and theological schools. Illustrations of teaching among all classes, lectures upon the various departments of Bible investigation, critical study of the sacred text itself, weekly preparation of assigned tasks, would soon raise up a class of competent Sunday-school teachers in our midst, every one of whom would inspire the teachers of our schools with holy ambition to secure greater efficiency in teaching. An institute of this kind in Chicago, under the auspices of your Union, in rooms appropriately furnished for the use of Sunday-school teachers, might wield an amount of influence throughout the schools of the North-west which at a casual glance you may not estimate.

November 24th, of the same year, Messrs. Pardee and Ralph Wells, of New York, held their first regular Sunday-school Institute in Steuben County, N. Y. From this time on Mr. Vincent gave himself, with the utmost enthusiasm of his nature, to the promotion of this form of aggressive Institute work, east and west, as did also those two "burning and shining" evangelists of better things in the Sunday-school, Mr. Pardee and Mr. Ralph Wells. And this went

on until many of the schools of the country began to be not only profoundly dissatisfied with the hap-hazard methods then in vogue, but awakened also to a sense of the practicableness of something vastly more systematic, natural, worthy, rational, and effective. New Sunday-school ideas were getting abroad and setting the minds of multitudes in a state of eager ferment. Those who possessed any skill in discerning the signs of the time must have perceived that the cause was reaching a point when some extraordinary changes might soon be expected.

The Lesson System would never have been practicable, even if it might have been at some time experimented with, had it not been *preceded by this Sunday-school Institute movement*.

The Convention was for enthusiasm, the Institute for instruction. For effectiveness in kindling the white-heat of spiritual enthusiasm at Sunday-school Conventions Ralph Wells, of New York, has not been surpassed. For instructiveness at a Sunday-school Institute, in certain respects, Mr. Pardee, for a number of years, was unequalled. He entered the service of the New York Sunday-School Union in 1853; he died in 1869. He was for say ten years one of the foremost leaders in Sunday-school progress in America. "Organize! organize!" was one of his characteristic watch-words. He, perhaps, more than any one else taught our schools how to organize their forces in the best way; at least, he set them upon the earnest inquiry as to how this could be done. The value of his contribution to the advancement of the cause in this respect can hardly be over-rated. It was necessary to what was to follow. In the "apostolic succession" of Sunday-school formers and reformers he bore a noble part. As Mr. George H. Stuart,

President of the National Sunday-School Convention at Newark, 1869, said:—

This was the beloved Pardee, whom God in his loving providence lent to the American Church, to give a standing and character and an impulse to Sunday-school work that no other man of his day had been able to give it.

Mr. Stuart also said, on the same occasion:—

Who can write the history of American Sunday-schools in the last ten years? Has not the cause made glorious progress? Look at the institutes for teachers—schools of instruction in the best ways of carrying the truth of God's word to the child's heart; look at the conventions and associations, and town and county gatherings, for the *stimulus* and instruction of workers in the cause; look at the more modern plans and appliances—the blackboards, and object-lessons, and model exercises, and maps,* and pictures, and mottoes, and improved buildings, and all; and shall we not see the wonderful advance that has been made in the material resources and power of our schools? and all as a means to the end of better study, and better teaching, and more spiritual power, and larger spiritual results.

That was said, and nobly said, two years before the Uniform Lesson System became national.

The spirit which dominated in these institutes and conventions, local and national, and which, as a voice, went forth about all the "wilderness" of the American Churches, demanding recognition and preparing for the better era, we find still further expressed in these words of Dr. Vincent, at the same convention of 1869:—

A great deal in the whole matter of teaching and training depends upon where the teacher keeps his scholars. If he places them in his heart, and carries them every day to the mercy-seat; if he lets the light of eternity fall upon their upturned faces in the class; if he recalls his own childhood, its thoughts and ways, and then teaches from such a

stand-point, we shall not need to talk much about normal classes and institutes for that. The great thing in Sunday-school training is the spiritual preparation. Having been engaged in normal class work since 1857, I have by pen and voice tried to emphasize this one point: that spiritual preparation is the main thing. The idea that by frequent polishing of the brass of the ornaments of the locomotive, you can get up heat enough to make the engine go, is simply absurd.

When large, increasingly large, bodies of men begin to feel strongly that way, and when, besides, the genius of invention is allowed free scope, signal changes may be expected soon to come.

ADVANCED THOUGHT AND WORK IN ILLINOIS.

The Sunday-school gatherings of this period, instead of being, as formerly, assemblies for mere mutual encouragement, had begun to contemplate systematic action. There was a cry for concentration, co-operation—an enthusiasm for organization. Nowhere else was this more signally true than in Illinois. Said Edward Eggleston :—

If Illinois has done any thing for Sunday-schools, it has been by making her State Conventions glowing mass meetings, by getting crowds together and fairly breaking down the hospitality of the towns that had the temerity to invite it among them. The State Convention, then, for impulse, and the County Conventions for thorough organization, for gathering up the impulse and sending it out into every community, that it may reach and raise every school within its borders.

The first Illinois Sunday-school Convention was held in 1859. It was not a large gathering, hardly a score ; but great is the day of small beginnings. The three following annual conventions were still but slimly attended. Mr. E. C. Wilder, then of Chicago, with the Rev. S. G. Lathrop, and two or three others, had been chiefly instrumental in creat-

ing the institution, and carrying it on from year to year. But in 1864, at Springfield, it received a mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit, and at once became a power in the State. Mr. Moody and Mr. Jacobs, fresh from the labors and scenes of the "Christian Commission," at the front among the Boys in Blue, were in no mood for dawdling over religious "red-tape." Said Mr. Moody, the evening before the opening service: "This thing so far has been a dead failure; we must do something to give it power." Beginning with a prayer-meeting, where, perhaps, half a dozen were present, within a day or two the whole city was moved. A profound and intense spiritual enthusiasm was awakened. A revival began on the spot. The spirit of the meeting spread all over the State, as the delegates went back to their homes. More than ten thousand conversions in connection with the Sunday-schools of the State were reported the following year. The blessing which came upon that convention has attended every subsequent one. From that time on Moody, Jacobs, Eggleston, Wilder, Reynolds, Alexander Tyng, J. V. Farwell, Major Whittle, P. P. Bliss, and others with them, were simply aflame with the one distinct purpose to cover the State with suitably organized Sunday-schools, and then to vitalize them with real power. Mr. Moody was then, as he has been ever since, and every-where, the "torch among the sheaves of wheat"—a prodigious personal force, dominated by a spirit of absolute consecration, and affecting, more than any of them at the time could know, all who came within the scope of his influence. The impulse and the determination to multiply and *improve* the Sunday-schools in the State was profound, intense, and wide-spread.

If Chicago has any just claim to its reputation for bold-

ness, push, dash, faith, and audacity of enterprise, it has never shown it in any thing more finely than in just this matter of the Sunday-school.

Said H. Thane Miller, of Cincinnati:—

Wet and miserable as was the marsh on which Chicago stands, it was made a most beautiful city by pure enthusiasm. It is full of it. Chicago is the place where more work is done, and more talk about the work, than any other place in the Union! But I glory in their talk; if they did not talk so much they would not work so much. And if you, my brethren of other cities, have half as much to talk about you may just begin!

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS' QUARTERLY.

Another essentially important fact was the development about this time of a higher order of Sunday-school periodical literature.

In 1865 Rev. John H. Vincent, a young Methodist preacher in Chicago, conceived the idea of the "Sunday-School Teachers' Quarterly," since called the "National Sunday-School Teacher." He was supported in this enterprise by the "Chicago Sunday-School Union." The "Union" undertook to be responsible for the salary of Mr. Vincent, who gave his whole time to the services of the "Union." Messrs. Adams, Blackmer, & Lyon were engaged as publishers.

The "salutatory" words in the first number of the "Sunday-School Teachers' Quarterly" well express the actuating spirit and intent, and have, as read now, in the light of what has since come to pass, an almost prophetic ring:—

We do not call for a journal merely to give publicity to our operations. We could afford to wait for coming ages to find out what we have been doing. The teacher needs teaching. The problem that perplexes one, another is able to solve. The obscure school has its ingenious and suc-

cessful superintendent who devises practicable plans. There are a thousand schools in need of his suggestions. The most practicable Sunday-school ideas come from our most practical teachers. We need a magazine which shall open its pages to such teachers, and give the entire Church the benefit of their discoveries and inventions—to give *plans and courses of study*—thus enabling the least efficient schools to know how the best are conducted. The Sunday-school Teachers' Institute which has recently been established in our city will, it is to be hoped, *inaugurate a new era* in the Sunday-school cause among us.

And this it did.

THE NEW LESSON SCHEME.

At the beginning of the following year, 1866, the Quarterly was changed to a Monthly, and named "The Sunday-School Teacher." A special feature of the Quarterly had been the four optional series of lessons, one of them arranged from the London Sunday-School Union, and one prepared by the editor. In the fall of 1865, in an Institute held by the Chicago Union, the question was formally proposed by Mr. Vincent: "Is it practicable to introduce a uniform system of lessons into all our schools?" The first number of the "Sunday-School Teacher" was the cradle of the new idea.

The invention of this Lesson Scheme referred to is one of the most notable facts in connection with the recent history of Sunday-schools. It was a fruitful seed-corn of all that has followed. It is remarkable how many qualities it combined, and how closely all the best forms of lesson series and lesson analyses have followed it. It must have been conceived as the result of a great deal of the most observant and sagacious thinking on the part of the inventor—a kind of fruit that was well-ripened before it was picked. It was called "TWO YEARS WITH JESUS: A New System of Sunday-School Study.")

TWO YEARS WITH JESUS.

A NEW SYSTEM OF SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDY.

FIRST YEAR : LIFE, JOURNEYS, AND MIRACLES OF JESUS.

SECOND YEAR : THE PARABLES, CONVERSATIONS, AND DISCOURSES OF JESUS.

I.—THE SYSTEM

1. Comprises only twenty-four lessons for the year, spending two Sabbaths upon each lesson.
2. The fifth Sabbath of the Five-Sabbath-Months reserved for review, concert of prayer, missionary exercises, etc.
3. THE TEACHER will contain analyses, notes, quotations, maps, anecdotes, and other illustrations for all lessons, for the use of teachers, prepared and compiled under the supervision of the entire editorial committee, representing the different denominations. Two lessons will appear monthly.
4. Each lesson will be divided into two question-lessons for the use of the scholars, each number of THE TEACHER containing four question-lessons.
5. These question-lessons will be published on question-papers, and furnished gratuitously to those schools taking at least ten copies of THE TEACHER. Scholars will receive five extra question-papers (containing the four lessons for the month) for every subscriber. Thus twenty subscribers in a school receive one hundred question-papers.
6. The "Elliptical arrangement" of the lesson on the question-paper is especially commended to the notice of teachers.
7. A "Golden Text," or a selection of Scripture for memorizing each Sabbath, is given.
8. A "Home Lesson" is also suggested, thus encouraging the reading of the Bible at home by the children.
9. A simple and beautiful plan of analysis of all Scripture lessons is also furnished.

II.—PLAN OF ANALYSIS:

OR UNIVERSAL QUESTION GUIDE, ADAPTED TO ALL BIBLE LESSONS.

P. P. P. P. D. D. D. D.

Here are four P's and four D's, by the aid of which teachers and scholars may prepare every lesson:

1. P. P. PARALLEL PASSAGES. Is the incident, parable, conversation, or discourse of the lesson, or anything like it elsewhere given in Scripture.
2. P. PERSONS (Biographical.) Who wrote this lesson, and to whom? What persons are mentioned, and what do you know about them?
3. P. PLACES (Topographical.) Where did these persons live? Places mentioned in the lessons? Where situated? Size, distance, and direction from Jerusalem?

4. D. DATES (Chronological.) In what year of the world and of Christ did these things occur? Age of persons mentioned? Allusion to days, hours, seasons, &c.

5. D. DOINGS (Historical.) What did each person of the lesson do? Who had the most to do? Why?

6. D. DOCTRINES (Theological.) What truths about God, man, character, conduct, the future, and the present are here taught?

7. D. DUTIES (Practical.) What duties to God, man, self, to church, nation, neighbor, enemy, friend, world, old, young, good, and bad, are here taught?

III.—LIST OF LESSONS FOR THE FIRST YEAR.

THE LIFE, JOURNEYS, AND MIRACLES OF JESUS.

Sabbaths.	Topics.	Home lesson.	Golden Text.
Jan. 7,.....	<i>The Babe of Bethlehem</i> announced by angels.—Luke 11: 8-14,.....	An appropriate Scripture home reading lesson will be designated in "The Teacher," for every week of the year.	Matthew 1: 21.
" 14,.....	and found by the shepherds.—Luke 11: 14-20,.....		John 1: 1-14.
" 21,.....	<i>The Boy in the Temple</i> : missed and found,.....		Luke 11: 49.
" 28,.....	Luke 11: 40-52,.....		Colossians 111: 20.
Feb. 4,.....	<i>The Man at the Jordan</i> , baptized by John.—Mat. 111: 13-15,.....		Matthew 111: 11-15.
" 11,.....	and approved by the Father.—Mat. 111: 16-17,.....		Matthew 111: 16-17.
" 18,.....	<i>The Tempted One</i> : The three trials.—Mat. 1V: 1-9,.....		Hebrews 1V: 15.
" 25,.....	and the three triumphs.—Mat. 1V: 1-11,.....		Hebrews 1V: 16.
Mar'ch 4,.....	<i>The Transfigured Christ</i> , with the Saints.—Luke 1X: 28-31,.....		Matthew XVII: 4.
" 11,.....	and with the Disciples.—Luke 1X: 32-36,.....		Matthew XVII: 5.
" 18,.....	<i>The Grief of Gethsemane</i> : the struggle.—Luke XXI: 39-44,.....		Matthew XXVI: 38.
" 25,.....	and the victory.—Luke XXII: 45-53,.....		Matthew XXVI: 39.
April 1,.....	<i>The Trial of the Innocent</i> , before Annas and Caiaphas.—John XVIII: 12-27,.....		Mark XIV: 61-62.
" 8,.....	and before Pilate.—John XVIII: 28-40; XIX: 1-10,.....		John XVIII: 37.
" 15,.....	<i>The Crucified One</i> : approaching.—Luke XXIII: 26-32,.....		Romans V: 7-8.
" 22,.....	and on the Cross.—Luke XXIII: 33-56,.....		Luke XXIII: 34.
" 29,.....	CONCERT,.....		Philippians IV: 8.
May 6,.....	<i>The Crucified alive again</i> , in Judea.—Luke XXIV,.....		Luke XXIV: 32.
" 13,.....	and in Galilee.—John XXI,.....		John XXI: 15.
" 20,.....	<i>The Ascending Lord</i> : on Olivet.—Luke XXIV: 50-53,.....		Mat. XXVII: 19-20.
" 27,.....	and in the clouds.—Acts 1: 9-14,.....		Mark XVI: 19.
June 3,.....	<i>The Journeys of Jesus</i> : in North Palestine.—Mat. 1V: 12-25,.....		Mark 1: 38.
" 10,.....	and in the South,.....		Acts X: 38.
" 17,.....	<i>The Cities of Christ's labor and residence</i> ,.....		Matthew XI: 23.
" 24,.....	<i>The Mountains of Jesus</i> ,.....		Psalms CXXV: 1-2.
July 1,.....	<i>Jesus wrought Miracles</i> in great numbers.—Mat. 1V: 23-25,.....		Luke VII: 22.
" 8,.....	and as proof of Divine authority.—John 111: 1-2,.....		John V: 16.
" 15,.....	<i>The First Miracle</i> : the circumstances.—John 11: 1-11,.....		Exodus XV: 25.
" 22,.....	and lesson.—John 11: 1-11,.....		John 11: 11.
" 29,.....	CONCERT,.....		Psalms 1: 1-3.
Aug. 5,.....	<i>Sight to the Blind</i> , at Jerusalem.—John 1X: 1-7,.....		John 1X: 25.
" 12,.....	and at Bethsaida.—Mark VIII: 22-26,.....		Ephesians V: 14.
" 19,.....	<i>Health to the Leprous</i> , in Galilee.—Mat. VIII: 1-4,.....		1 John 1: 7.
" 26,.....	and in Samaria.—Luke XVII: 11-19,.....		2 Cor. VI: 17-18.
Sept. 2,.....	<i>Food to the Famishing</i> : the five thousand.—Mat. XIV: 15-21,.....		John VI: 27.
" 9,.....	and the four thousand.—Mat. XV: 32-39,.....		John VI: 35.
" 16,.....	<i>Hearing to the Deaf</i> .—Mark VII: 31-37,.....		Isaiah XXXV: 5.
" 23,.....	and speech to the dumb.—Mark VII: 31-37,.....		Isaiah XXXV: 6.
" 30,.....	CONCERT,.....		Isaiah XXXV: 1-2.
Oct. 7,.....	<i>Calmed the Storm</i> .—Mat. VIII: 23-27,.....		Psalms CVII: 29-30.
" 14,.....	and in Mat. XIV: 22-31,.....		Matthew XIV: 27.
" 21,.....	<i>Cast out Devils</i> , in Galilee.—Mat. VIII: 28-34,.....		James IV: 7.
" 28,.....	and in Syrophenicia.—Mark XV: 21-28,.....		Mat. XV: 26-27.
Nov. 4,.....	<i>The Dead Girl</i> : visited.—Mat. 1X: 18-19,.....		Matthew 1X: 24.
" 11,.....	and raised from her bed.—Mat. 1X: 23-26,.....		1 Cor. XV: 19-20.
" 18,.....	<i>The Dead Youth</i> : met.—Luke VII: 11-13,.....		1 Cor. XV: 53.
" 25,.....	and raised from his bier.—Luke VII: 14-17,.....		1 Cor. XV: 54-55.
Dec. 2,.....	<i>The Dead Man</i> , mourned for.—John XI: 17-32,.....		John XI: 23-24.
" 9,.....	and raised from his tomb.—John XI: 33-46,.....		John XI: 25-26.
" 16,.....	<i>The Sinner Saved</i> , before.—Mat. 1X: 1-8,.....		Mat. XI: 28-30.
" 23,.....	and after Christ's death.—Acts XXVI: 13-20,.....		1 Timothy 1: 15.
" 30,.....	CONCERT,.....		1 John 11: 15-17.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON I.—No. 1.

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM ANNOUNCED BY ANGELS.

I.—SCRIPTURE

LESSON: *Luke* II: 8-14. HOME READING: *1 Sam.*, xvi; *Mat.* I-II.

II.—GOLDEN TEXT.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins.—*Mat.* I: 21.

III.—ELLIPTICAL EXERCISE.

During this exercise, which should be the first after the recitation of the text, let the scholars close their testaments. The teacher will read the following, the scholars supplying the omitted words:

8. And there were in the same—shepherds abiding in—keeping—over their—by—.

9. And lo, the—of—came upon—and the glory—shone round about—; and they were—.

10. And the angel said unto—, Fear—for, behold, I—you good—which shall be—.

11. For unto you is born this—in—a Savior, which is—.

12. And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye shall—the babe wrapped—, lying—.

13. And suddenly there was with—a multitude of—praising—and saying

14. Glory to —, and on earth—.

IV.—TOPICS.

1 The night-watch—v. 8.

2 The angel's visit—v. 9.

3. The angel's message—v. 10-12.

4. The choir of angels—v. 13-14.

The class having recited the golden text, and supplied promptly and perfectly the omitted words of the elliptical exercise, will now recite this outline until perfectly familiar with it. After this, let them be drilled upon the following questions, the teacher seeking to hold their attention every moment. Encourage them to ask questions of their own, and make a close, practical, personal application of the subject to them

V.—QUESTIONS.

The numbers correspond to those of the analytical questions above. Questions in CAPITAL LETTERS are for the smallest children. The middle classes will use all except "Questions for Teachers and Senior Scholars."

REPEAT THE FOUR POINTS OF THE LESSON.—1. Will one of the scholars describe the night watch? What persons are mentioned? WHAT IS A SHEPHERD? What great patriarch, lawgiver, and king were shepherds? WHAT WERE THESE SHEPHERDS DOING? Why? Was it hard work? See *Genesis* xxxi: 36-40. Where were these shepherds? NEAR WHAT TOWN WERE THE SHEPHERDS? Point it out on the map. Give some of its Bible names. Where is the "field" mentioned in verse 8? (About half a mile east of the town.) WHAT SHEPHERD BOY OF BETHLEHEM BECAME A KING? What other place was called "the city of David"?

2. NAME THE SECOND TOPIC. What is an angel? (In the Greek, "a messenger"; one who is sent.) DO YOU KNOW ANY STORY ABOUT ANGELS? What shepherd traveler once saw angels in his dreams? Do you remember the name of any angel? Why is this one called "Angel of the Lord." WAS IT PERFECTLY DARK WHILE THE ANGEL WAS WITH THE SHEPHERDS? What is your reason for thinking it was—or that it

was not? HOW DID THE SHEPHERDS FEEL? Why did they feel so? How should you have felt under the circumstances? What did the "glory of the Lord" look like?—*Exod. xl: 34-38.*

3. NAME THE THIRD TOPIC. WHAT WERE THE FIRST TWO WORDS SPOKEN BY THE ANGEL? What four things did the angel say? Why was all this "good tidings"? ABOUT WHOM DID THE ANGEL TELL? WHEN BORN? WHERE BORN? WHERE LAID? HOW DRESSED? What were "swaddling clothes"? What names does the angel give to Christ?

4. NAME THE FOURTH TOPIC. What glorious scene occurred? How many angels were there? Are there many angels? GIVE THE ANGELS' SONG? Why should the angels make so much ado about a poor babe? IF THE ANGELS LOVED AND PRAISED JESUS, WHAT OUGHT MAN TO DO? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THOSE WHO TAKE HIS NAME IN VAIN? What three things is He called in verse 11?

QUESTIONS ON LESSON I.—No. 2.

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM FOUND BY THE SHEPHERDS.

I.—SCRIPTURE.

LESSON: *Luke 11: 15-20.* HOME READING: *Luke 1-11.*

II.—GOLDEN TEXT.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. * * And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."—*John 1: 13-14.*

III.—ELLIPTICAL EXERCISE.

15. And it came to pass, as the angels were—from them into—the shepherds said—Let us now go even—and see this—which is come—which the Lord hath—unto us.

16. And they came with—and found—and—lying—.

17. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was

told them concerning—.

18. And all that had heard it wondered at—which were told them by—.

19. But Mary kept all these things, and—in her—.

20. And the shepherds—glorifying and—for all the things that they had—as it was told unto them.

IV.—TOPICS.

1. A good resolution—v. 15.

2. A blessed visit—v. 16.

3. A good report—v. 17.

4. The results—v. 18-20.

V.—QUESTIONS.

1. GIVE THE FOUR TOPICS. DID THE ANGELS REMAIN WITH THE SHEPHERDS ALL NIGHT? WHERE DID THE ANGELS GO? What did the shepherds resolve? Why did they not send a spy or agent? Did they doubt the angel's report? What would have been the result if the shepherds had disbelieved, or laughed at each other for being afraid, or put off going to Bethlehem? DOES GOD EVER TELL US ABOUT JESUS AS SAVIOUR? (Yes, by his Holy Spirit in our hearts.) Do we always do as the shepherds did?

2. How far did they have to go? (Half a mile, perhaps.) DESCRIBE THE VISIT IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE. (The word "manger" does not mean

"crib" but "stable"). What other men visited the babe Jesus after this? —*Mat. II: 1.*

3. DID THE SHEPHERDS KEEP THEIR VISIT A SECRET? Would *you* have told about it? Why?

4. WHAT IS THE LAST TOPIC? HOW WERE THE PEOPLE AFFECTED WHO HEARD OF IT? What is it to "wonder"? WHAT DID MARY DO?—*v. 19.* What is it to "ponder"? DID THE SHEPHERDS STAY IN BETHLEHEM? WERE THEY SAD ON THEIR WAY BACK? What reason had they to be so glad? Have we greater reason to rejoice, because of Christ's birth? Why

LESSON II.—PART I.

THE BOY IN THE TEMPLE.

I.—SCRIPTURE.

LESSON: *Luke II: 40-52.* HOME READING: *1 Samuel I-III.*

II.—GOLDEN TEXT.

And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? —*Luke II: 45.*

III.—ELLIPTICAL EXERCISE.

40. And the child grew, and waxed—
filled with—and the—was upon him.

41. Now his parents went to—every
—at the—of the—.

42. And when he was—they went up
—after the—of the—.

43. And when they had fulfilled—as
they returned, the child Jesus—behind
in—, and Joseph and—knew—.

44. But they, supposing him to have
been—went a day's—and they sought
him among—and—.

45. And when they found him not, they
—again to—seeking him.

46. And it came to pass, that after—
they found him in the—sitting in the

—of the—both hearing them, and
—questions.

47. And all that heard him were—at
his understanding and—.

48. And when they saw him they were
—and his mother said unto him,
why hast thou thus—with us? behold,
thy—and I have—thee sorrowing.

49. And he said unto them,—.

50. And they understood not the saying
which he spake unto them.

51. And he went down with them, and
came—and was—unto them; but
his mother kept all these in her—.

52. And Jesus increased in—and
stature, and in—with God and—.

IV.—TOPICS.

1. The child Jesus at Nazareth—*v. 40.* 4. Found—*v. 46-50.*

2. On his paschal journey—*v. 41-42.* 5. At home again—*v. 51-52.*

3. Lost—*v. 43-45.*

V.—QUESTIONS.

1. GIVE FIRST TOPIC. NAME OF THE CHILD? WHERE DID HE LIVE? His parents' name? Joseph's trade?—*Mat. XIII: 55.*

2. SECOND TOPIC. What do you mean by "paschal"? WITH WHOM DID HE GO? HOW OLD WAS JESUS THEN? How often was the passover held? In what Hebrew month? (In the month Nisan or Abib, corresponding to our *April*. On what day of the month? (The fourteenth.) What Christian festival have we about the same time of the year?

3. THIRD TOPIC. How far were they from Jerusalem when they missed Christ? What does the expression "fulfilled the days" mean?—*v. 43.* WHERE DID MANY SUPPOSE JESUS WAS ALL THE TIME?

4. **FOURTH TOPIC.** HOW LONG DID THEY SEARCH? HOW SOON, AND WHERE DID THEY FIND JESUS? Can you give the conversation between Jesus and his mother? What are the first recorded words of Jesus?—v. 49.

5. **NOW GIVE SOFTLY, AND IN CONCERT, THE FIVE TOPICS.** DID CHRIST GO WITH HIS PARENTS? WHERE TO? What is meant by his being “subject unto them”? WHAT TIME DID HE LEAVE?—*Mark* VI: 3. In what did he increase? What is it to be about God’s business in the world? How may a child do this? ARE YOU AT ALL LIKE THE SWEET CHILD JESUS? IN WHAT ARE YOU UNLIKE HIM?

LESSON II.—PART II.

THE BOY IN THE TEMPLE.

I.—SCRIPTURE.

LESSON: *Luke* II: 40-52. **HOME READING:** *Timothy* I: III.

II.—GOLDEN TEXT.

Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.—*Colossians* III: 20.

III.—ELLIPTICAL EXERCISE. IV.—TOPICS. Same as in Previous Lesson.

V.—QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT FOUR THINGS DOES LUKE SAY ABOUT JESUS IN VERSE FORTY? WHERE DID JESUS LIVE THEN? What is the present name of the place? (Na-si-rah.) Its population? (About 4,000.) How far is Nazareth from the following points: Sea of Galilee, Mediterranean Sea, Jerusalem?

2. TO WHAT CITY DID JESUS GO AT 12 YEARS OF AGE? HOW FAR FROM NAZARETH? What other names of Jerusalem can you give? How DID JESUS PROBABLY TRAVEL? If he went 22 miles a day how long would it require to reach Jerusalem? How many hours in “a day’s journey” in Palestine? (Six or eight.) How many miles an hour? (About three.) WHAT SACRED CITIES WOULD CHRIST PASS IN GOING BY MOST DIRECT ROAD FROM NAZARETH TO JERUSALEM? How often were the Jews required to go to Jerusalem?—*Exodus* XXIII: 17. Why did Mary go? (Probably because of her devotion to Jesus: or her religious zeal: or in order to visit relations in Bethlehem, Palestine.) How long did they stay in Jerusalem?

3. WHO WERE KINSFOLK AND ACQUAINTANCE? Was Mary to blame for losing sight of Christ? What did she and Joseph do?

4. WHERE WAS JESUS FOUND? Who built the temple? When destroyed? Who rebuilt it? Who repaired and beautified it? WITH WHOM DID THEY FIND JESUS? Were they physicians? WHAT WAS JESUS DOING? Was he really “disputing” with any one? Whom did he call “Father” in verse 49? IS GOD THE FATHER OF LITTLE CHILDREN NOW? Has He any “business” in the world for us to do now-a-days? What business?

5. WOULD YOU LOVE SUCH A COMPANION AS JESUS WAS AFTER HIS RETURN TO NAZARETH. DO YOU NOW DO OR SAY ANYTHING EVERY DAY THAT YOU WOULD NOT IF JESUS WAS WITH YOU? BUT IS HE NOT WITH US EVERY DAY? Why is it easier and wiser to be Christians in childhood than to wait until we become men and women?

The plan included twenty-four lessons for the year, two Sabbaths being given to each lesson. These lessons were to be accompanied in the "Teacher" by analyses, notes, quotations, maps, anecdotes, and other illustrations for each lesson. There were also to be given, in connection with each lesson, a single selection of Scripture to be memorized, which was called the "Golden Text," "Home Readings," etc. A "Plan of Analysis," or "Universal Question Guide, adapted to all Bible Lessons," was proposed and followed, designated by four P's and four D's: Parallel Passages, Persons, Places, Dates, Doings, Doctrines, and Duties.

Only slight improvements have been made upon that Plan since then. It is not, of course, claimed that every feature of it was absolutely new; only that in the roundabout completeness of the scheme it was new, and did, in fact, introduce "a new era in the Sunday-school cause." Ideas, notions, that had been floating, in solution as it were, in other minds, in Mr. Vincent's mind now began to crystallize into such perfectness of form as to arrest general attention, and commend itself convincingly to others. Quite a large number of schools in Chicago and vicinity at once adopted it. There were published the first year four thousand copies of the "Teacher," and twenty thousand copies of the "Lesson Paper." The plan was seen to be apt, and was found to work admirably.

But before the close of the first year Rev. Mr. Vincent was convinced that providential indications called him to labor in his own denomination. He therefore withdrew from the editorial conduct of the new "Sunday-School Teacher," and "went East," to New York, to serve in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Sunday-School Union. He continued,

however, to prepare the lessons throughout the year. The fact to be specially noticed just here is, that *this was the first series of analytical lesson notes and scholars' papers ever periodically* issued in the United States, if not in the world. And these were undenominational. While the style has changed somewhat, the substantial features of Mr. Vincent's Lesson Paper have been retained in every subsequent publication of the kind.

Mr. Vincent severed his connection with the Chicago Union, to enter the service of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in its Sunday-School Department, with head-quarters in New York, May 1, 1866, having been editor of the "Quarterly" one year, and of the "Monthly," four months. He was succeeded as editor by Rev. H. L. Hammond, who occupied the position four months, and he, in turn, was succeeded by C. R. Blackall, who was editor five months.

There is nothing in the "North-western Sunday-School Teachers' Quarterly," for 1865, or in the "Sunday-School Teacher," for 1866, which indicates that the idea of any uniform lesson system *for the country* had yet occurred to any one; and it is significant that, after his removal to New York, Mr. Vincent began the publication of a different series, which he called the "Berean Series," designed especially for his own denomination.

"The Teacher" passed from the control of the Chicago Sunday-School Teachers' Union to that of the enterprising publishing firm of Adams, Blackmer, & Lyons. Fortunately an editor was found to take Mr. Vincent's place, Rev. Edward Eggleston, also a young Methodist minister, full of genius, devotion, and enthusiasm. He took up the scheme of lessons where his predecessor had dropped it, and by his extraor-

dinary enthusiasm, tact, personal force, and literary skill, brought the scheme into wide, almost national, repute, and raised the magazine, now called the "National Sunday-School Teacher," to the front rank, as the very best exponent of wide-awake, inventive, aggressive Sunday-school thought and work. Its success was unprecedented. Within three or four years "The Teacher" attained a monthly circulation of 35,000 copies, and the "Scholars' Lesson Paper" of more than 350,000.) Dr. Eggleston possesses in a remarkable degree the editorial instinct and capacity, apt to see straight into the heart of any question, having a wholesome abhorrence of cant and shams of every sort, totally and intensely given up to the undertaking in hand, versatile and free in choosing the fittest ways for getting at a thing, and, withal, direct, fresh, terse, concise, and incisive in the utterance of himself. From first to last he has stoutly opposed any scheme of general cut-and-dried *uniformity* in Sunday-schools, as being repressive of individuality and freedom; and yet, it must be said that, after Dr. Vincent and Mr. B. F. Jacobs—all of Chicago—he did more than any other one person to make the adoption of the National Uniform System of Lessons possible. The success of the "Teacher," under Mr. Eggleston's editorial conduct, and of the courses of lessons which he devised, and of the lesson expositions which he prepared, was a marvel. To the stricter denominationalists it was ominous. National "uniformity" in Sunday-school lessons was, indeed, dreaded by some of them, lest, if the series of lessons presented in the "Teacher" should go on extending, as they had done, the chances for putting the sectarian cue into the Sunday-school instruction might be taken away from them. Within a short time, as many as nine other periodicals had adopted the

"Teachers' " Courses of Lessons, giving their own expositions. The first weekly paper to do this was the "Chicago Standard," (Baptist,) in which the expositions were given, with really brilliant success, by Mr. Jacobs. Shortly after, the "Chicago Advance" began the publication of its own expositions of these lessons, prepared by the writer of this.

But, it may be remarked, it is almost never true of any great fact that it had but one leading factor. To give seed to the sower is one thing; to give bread to the eater is quite another. To invent a thing, however finely it match some vast need, is not the same thing as to secure the general recognition and adoption of it. First of all, in this case, the times were, by a hundred converging indications, ripening for the coming change.

In the good providence of God, who knows so well what his children are fit for, and how best to use them, it was given, as I have said, to the first editor of the Chicago "Sunday-School Teacher," Rev. John H. Vincent—then in the flush morning of a manhood which, one suspects, never will know how to part with its youth—to *invent*, so to say, *the kind of lesson scheme*, which it was presently given to Rev. Edward Eggleston, as the subsequent editor of the "Sunday-School Teacher," to develop into still further perfection, and to push into an amazing popular success; and which, again, it was given to Mr. B. F. Jacobs, to see *might, could, should*, and *must* be expanded into a uniform lesson system—not for the locality merely, nor for the denomination merely, but for the nation, and (to use his own expression) "for the Sunday-schools of this country not only; but, blessed be God! we hope, for the world!" While, still again, it was due to Dr. Vincent, more than to any other individual, that our lesson

system, which had become measurably national, was made to broaden out into international, inter-continental, one might almost say, ecumenical, proportions.

I have no intention, let me here say, of "singing any swan's song, to make a goose of any body," in what I have said. I only think that some things are as well to be told in the time of it as to be chiseled on a tombstone. As a matter of personal achievement—brought about, under God, as the result of a conviction felt in the bones, burning in the heart, tense as a bow-string on every fiber of the brain: carried out by dint of a determination dead in earnest, an insistence and a persistence as resolute as the centripetal law of gravity; a tact and skill that knew when to push and when to strike; how to poise the hand and withhold the blow that might fail by being premature or untimely; how to state, argue, plead, in private and in public, at home and away from home—as a matter of achievement, I say, I know of few beneficent enterprises more worthy of study, as showing how to *see*, and then how to *do* a thing, than that event which came to pass in 1872, and which has led to the entire reconstruction of our Sunday-school system of religious instruction.

The experiment which the schools of the country have tried, are still trying, is one calling for the devoutest and most profoundly grateful acknowledgment of God's wisdom, without which ours is but blindness and folly, and with which the best that any among us can find to say will still be:—

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
Jesus Christ is my all in all."

But just how, at last, the great plan came to be actually adopted needs a somewhat more specific explanation.

(It appears that so early as 1867 Mr. B. F. Jacobs, seeing the striking fitness of the scheme of consecutive lessons, as started by Mr. Vincent, and as still more fully developed by Mr. Eggleston, for the uniform use, not only by all the classes in a school, but equally for a variety of schools, went a step further. If good for all the classes in a school, and for all the schools of all denominations in a city, why not good for the schools of the whole country? Once he allowed freedom to his thought in this direction, the logic of the matter began to grow clear, as obvious as any other open secret when once it has been fairly looked at. The consequence was, Mr. Jacobs became a visionary. He "dreamed dreams" and "saw visions;" and the divinely-awakened vision was that of the schools all over the country uniting on the same course of Bible lessons, but each school *teaching* the lessons in its own way, and each denomination affording the best helps it could for its own schools. A man with a "fire in his bones" does not sit still; neither did Mr. Jacobs.) He began in Chicago, and at various institutes and conventions in the West, to advocate this Uniform Lesson Plan: First, One lesson for the whole school; Second, One lesson for all the schools of the country; Third, The publication of lesson notes, by not only the monthly, but also the weekly religious press, and copied by the secular press; Fourth, He urged, with others, the adoption throughout the city of Chicago of the series published by the "Sunday-School Teacher." And in January, 1868, he induced the "Standard," the Baptist paper of the West, published in Chicago, to begin the publication of weekly lesson notes prepared by himself. These weekly notes at once became the most marked feature of the paper. Soon after Mr. Jacobs visited the East and urged the plan upon the "Sunday-School Times,"

then edited by I. Newton Baker, and the three leading Baptist papers, the "Examiner and Chronicle," of New York; the "Watchman and Reflector," of Boston; and the "National Baptist," of Philadelphia. Shortly after his return he began the publication of notes in the "Heavenly Tidings," the Sunday-school paper published by the Chicago Young Men's Christian Association. During the same year, at Mr. Jacobs' suggestion to Mr. Moody, the plan was introduced of having the Chicago Saturday Noon Prayer-meeting take up the lesson for the following day. The enthusiasm with which this plan was adopted, and the national publicity given to it, most of all through the weekly reports of it contained in the Chicago "Advance," gave immense impulse to the uniform movement. These condensed reports of the Chicago noon meetings, especially of the Saturday noon meeting, were prepared with remarkable brightness, point, and pithy suggestiveness by Mr. M. C. Hazard, then the associate editor of that paper, (Congregational,) now the well-known editor of the "National Sunday-School Teacher." In May of the same year, 1868, Mr. Jacobs advocated the plan of uniform lessons before the Illinois State Convention, at Du Quoin, and in the fall of the same year before the New York State Convention, at Elmira.

With the beginning of the year 1869 the courses of lessons published by the "Chicago Sunday-School Teacher" had come into such wide use, East and West, that properly, the name of the periodical was changed to that of the "National Sunday-School Teacher." The more enlightened, inventive, aggressive Sunday-school men in all sections of the country were coming into closer relations of acquaintance and concert of purpose. There was a fast-growing sense of na-

tionality in the resistless enthusiasm for radically improved methods of popular Bible study. The remarkable interest in institute work was every now and then bringing them together. The best things which one found, or said, or did, or devised, were quickly communicated to the rest, and used. To whatever of subtle, sweet, potent inspiration comes of noble friendship fostered by common enthusiasm was added an impulse that springs from generous, though it may have been chiefly unconscious, emulation. Neither Dr. Eggleston, in Chicago, or Dr. Vincent, in New York, were likely to be wholly indifferent to each other's work or rival series of lessons, the "National Series," and the "Berean Series." But as indicating that the idea of a really national course of uniform lessons was approaching into view as something distinctly desirable, we find Mr. Eggleston, in the January number of the "Teacher" for 1869, saying:—

This course of lessons we especially desire to make acceptable. From one end of the country to the other there is a movement toward the uniform lessons. The present prospect is that more than 300,000 teachers and scholars [a moderate estimate as the result proved] will be engaged in studying this course within a year. For this reason we intend to begin the Life of Christ again next year. After our next course on this subject we hope to give one or two years to the study of the Old Testament.

Another thing quite necessary to the success of the movement toward the Uniform Lesson was the origination, as a regularly-recurring institution, of the National Sunday-School Convention. There had been two or three occasional "national" conventions in the years 1832, 1833, and 1859. For ten years there had been none. The need of one was now keenly felt. In this Dr. Eggleston was especially importu-

nate and active. In January, 1869, he wrote in the "Teacher:"—

The proposed International Sunday-School Convention has been deferred until next spring. But the very general and enthusiastic expression in its favor throughout the country renders it pretty certain that such a convention will be called to meet next April. But some of our prominent Sunday-school men question the utility of such a convention. But, [he added] it will be of the greatest value: 1. It will give prestige to our work. Americans like any thing continental in its scope. 2. What is of much more importance, it will give largeness to our plans. We are too much localized, too little national. 3. There is the greatest need of some central organization to awaken those States which have not yet organized conventions, etc.

How this first regularly-recurring National Convention was called, or rather called itself, into being, need not here be detailed. But it met in Newark, N. J., April 28-30, 1869, and proved to be one of the best conventions ever held in this country. Hon. George H. Stuart, of Philadelphia, presided. (A number of the delegates *en route* to the convention attended the meeting of the New York Teachers' Association, April 26. Mr. Jacobs spoke before the association on the subject of uniform lessons. Mr. Eggleston followed, good-naturedly characterizing the scheme as a "dream of his enthusiastic friend." At the Newark Convention Mr. Jacobs had charge of the superintendents' section. The subject was presented there, and received with great enthusiasm, several trying to get the floor at the same time. At least three fourths of the superintendents present, it is believed, wished the subject brought before the Convention for immediate action; but this Mr. Jacobs opposed, on the ground that several of the leading publishers were not ready for the movement, and that party action might endanger

the success of the plan. He did, however, report from the Section meeting to the Convention this formal and very notable declaration: "That a uniform lesson is essential to the highest success of every school, and that it is *practical* and *desirable to unite all the schools of our whole country upon one and the same series.*")

During the year he continued to advocate the measure at home and abroad, by voice and pen. The time was evidently ripening for it.

The "National Sunday-School Teacher," in its issue for October, 1869, said:—

A uniform lesson for the whole country is coming to be the demand of the Sunday-school public. The "Standard" of this city has borrowed our list of themes for the past two years, and Mr. Moody's "Heavenly Tidings" has done the same for the past year. The American Baptist Society of Philadelphia recently applied for the privilege of using our list of subjects for next year. Our publishers, desiring to promote uniformity, granted the permission, and thus four courses are on one lesson. As the first and leading lesson in the field, with a constituency of a quarter of a million, and an indorsement never before given to a Sunday-school lesson, we shall be glad to do all in our power to bring the whole country to the one list, trusting only to persevering endeavors to make our lessons excellent, for their continued success.

By the beginning of 1870 as many as thirty publications, monthly and weekly, had begun to publish current lesson notes. So that, in the January number of the "Teacher," 1870, Mr. Eggleston wrote: "That which a year ago seemed to us an impracticable dream, has come to look quite possible; we mean the uniform lesson for the whole country." In the February number Mr. Eggleston also said:—

We are constantly in receipt of letters asking us to endeavor to effect some arrangement with competing systems of lessons whereby the same

list of subjects may be used by all. It is even proposed that a convention be called to settle the matter. The "National Sunday-School Teacher" was first in the field. It was not until we were closing our third year with triumphant success, and an unmistakable verdict of approval, that denominational publishing houses, and others, thought of announcing periodical lessons. We have never uttered a word of objection. . . . Our list has always been given, freely, to all who asked the privilege of publishing lessons from it. Eight other publishing firms are now using this list, making, with ourselves, nine courses on one lesson. There are yet three or four courses using other lists. The only good reason for difference of lesson must be a belief on the part of those who differ, that ours is not the best selection. We write this item, because we are unwilling to have the Sunday-school public think that the publishers of this magazine conduct their business in such a way as to put their interests in the way of a uniform course of lessons for the whole country. And the friends of uniformity must possess their souls in patience. The progress already made is beyond all that they had any right to expect. We confess ourselves amazed when we think of the advancement in this direction during the past three or four years.

On the same editorial page occurs this indicative straw:—

ONE LESSON AT A TIME.—A year ago Rev. H. Clay Trumbull, whose authority in New England is second to no other, wrote: "The best ordered Sunday-schools attempt the study of but one lesson at a time. Inferior schools usually have two or three. There are schools sufficiently destitute of system to have each class on its 'own hook.'"

In March, 1870, Dr. Eggleston, in the "Teacher," writes:—

To Rev. J. H. Vincent the Sunday-school public owes much. The first to hold Sunday-school Institutes, the founder of this magazine, and, while editor of it, the first to introduce the periodical lesson in this country, not to name other services, it were very strange if any suggestion of his did not meet with a respectful consideration. But we must differ from him in the matter of submitting an international lesson-system to the Evangelical Alliance. We corresponded some time last

fall with those in charge of the alliance meeting in regard to the matter of holding a Sunday-school convention at that session, and were assured that the European members would not generally be Sunday-school men at all. And what a school in Kansas wants uniformity with a school in London for, we do not know.

Again, in the April number of the "Teacher," after referring to the history of the "Teacher," and the competition in the publication of courses of lessons, which began with the "Sunday-School Journal," in 1869, edited by Dr. Vincent, which announced a course of lessons for that year on "A Year with Moses," Dr. Eggleston says:—

The origin of the movement for uniformity is likely to be lost sight of. Some of our friends at the East talk and write as if they had brought forth an idea entirely new. For the sake of history, let us here record that our sanguine friend, Mr. Jacobs, who sells produce on South Water-street, [Chicago,] who is superintendent of the First Baptist Sunday-school on Wabash Avenue, who is the originator and *generalissimo* of the "United States Sunday-school army," and who writes lessons for the "Standard," makes live western speeches in conventions, and does more besides all that than we can begin to recount, is the *father of the idea of a national uniformity of lessons*. In his own denomination he has carried the day, the American Baptist Publication Society, and most of the Baptist papers, having adopted the calendar of the "National Series of Lessons." Recently, a synod in New York, and members of the Brooklyn Sunday-School Union, and Mr. Tyler, in the "Independent," and Mr. Vincent, have all talked of uniformity, as if the idea had just been originated; but we give fair warning that if the blessed time ever does come when all the children of this country study one lesson, we shall give the credit to B. F. Jacobs; he, and no one else, is "the original Jacobs."

But that the "National Sunday-School Teacher" was not then working for the realization of this idea, except indirectly, is evident from the following, taken from the same

editorial, and from a subsequent one in the September number of the same year:—

A selection by a committee is fatal to aggressive action. To submit to such a committee would be to endanger our success. We owe it to God and the work to refuse. The publishers and the editor, therefore, announce, after mature deliberation, that we cannot entertain any proposition that looks to a selection of our lessons by a convention or a committee of publishers. . . . Our intention is to go forward, and we shall, at all hazards, decline making any entangling alliances that might cripple our usefulness. For usefulness is better than uniformity. We say this with the utmost respect for those who have striven to bring about unity, and in the future, as heretofore, we shall still give the use of our list to those who desire it.

The great success of our course, and its adoption by other publications, has excited the most lively hopes of a uniform course for the country. Those periodicals that have given lessons on the subjects of the "National Series" have all prospered. We have freely given our list for the sake of uniformity. We shall give the use of it as freely in the future. But to those who propose any concession on our part that looks toward the submitting of our list to any committee or conference of "Unions," or private publishers, we have only to say, it is asking too much. This magazine has achieved its success as a private enterprise. It has ventured on lines of work untraveled before. Committees and conferences are timid and compromising. We should jeopard the success of our course, in forsaking the ideas upon which it has grown. With charity toward all, we stand by our colors.

It will be noticed in these quotations that Dr. Eggleston, on behalf of his publishers and himself, announces, "after mature deliberation" that they "cannot entertain any proposition that looks to the selection of *our* lessons by a convention or a committee of publishers," but are willing that others should unite upon *their* selection. This last proposition was so dictatorial that Dr. Vincent, who began the publication

of the periodical lessons in "The Sunday-School Teacher," felt that a great barrier was thrown in the way of uniformity. At the close of the year 1870, though the publishers were far apart, a very large number of the Sunday-school workers desired the uniform lessons. At the semi-annual convention of the Albany (N. Y.) County Sunday-School Association, held in November, the committee on uniform lessons reported that of the thirty-four schools connected with this association in the city of Albany, twenty-eight were then using uniform lessons. Of these, thirteen were united upon the series published in "The National Teacher" of Chicago, and six upon the Berean Series. Of the schools using the National Chicago Series, four were Presbyterian, four Baptist, three Reformed, one Congregational, and one Lutheran; while of those using the Berean Series, four were Methodist, one Baptist, and one Union.

The Executive Committee, appointed to arrange for the Indianapolis Convention of 1872, met in New York, July 10, 1871. Mr. Jacobs again presented the subject of uniform lessons, and finding the response quite general, it was decided to call a meeting of publishers, for August 8. During the interval Mr. Jacobs remained in the vicinity of New York, having an office in the city, and going there daily. Meeting Mr. Lyon, one of the publishers of the "National Sunday-School Teacher," in New York, he induced him to go to Long Branch with him, and, after a long discussion, Mr. Lyon consented to favor the plan. By publication, correspondence, and personal solicitation, twenty-nine of the various publishers, or their representatives, met to consider the subject. Mr. Jacobs was chairman of this meeting. After an earnest discussion it was decided, by a vote of twenty-six to

three, to appoint a committee to select a list of lessons for 1872. Drs. Eggleston, Vincent, and Newton, Rev. H. C. M'Cook, and B. F. Jacobs, were appointed a committee to do this work, and the meeting adjourned *sine die*. After the adjournment of this meeting the committee held a session. It was then past three o'clock, and Dr. Vincent insisted that the outline of the scheme must be formed that day. Dr. Newton said he was obliged to leave the city that afternoon. Mr. Jacobs was also obliged to leave, but said he would return the next morning. But as the other members of the committee insisted that the lessons must be selected that day, if at all, these two brethren agreed that the other members of the committee might begin the work of selecting the lessons. The three members of the committee held a meeting, and, after a brief consultation, agreed to disagree and publish the following card, which was printed that afternoon:—

UNIFORM LESSONS—THE FAILURE.—The undersigned, having been appointed at the conference held at the call of the National Executive Committee, a committee to select a course of lessons for the whole Sunday-school public, find it impossible at this late day to select a list of subjects acceptable to all, or creditable enough to put the experiment on a fair basis. The compromise necessary to effect a union at this moment renders it out of the question to get a good list, and with the most entire unanimity we agree that it is best to defer action until the matter shall have been discussed in the National Convention.

[Signed]

EDWARD EGGLESTON,
J. H. VINCENT,
HENRY C. M'COOK.

NEW YORK, *August 8, 1871.*

Six copies of this card were mailed *that night* to different papers for publication, and it was *almost a failure!* How

difficult a thing it was to bring about "the compromise necessary to effect a union at that moment" can only be appreciated by those intimately acquainted with the personal and denominational and publicational interests which seemed to be involved in the question. The idea of some uniform lessons for the schools of the country was, of course, fascinating to all. Some of its vast advantages were at once obvious—a thing which ought, some time, to be. But think how many private systems and projects, hopes and special enterprises, already under way and well advanced, might have to be abandoned in order to agreement. Dr. Eggleston was ready enough to consent to a uniform lesson provided the rest would consent to adopt his course of lessons. And it must be said that his lessons had become, to a remarkable extent, "national," proving, once for all, the practicability of a course of lessons which the denominations might adopt without detriment to any proper denominational indoctrination. And then Dr. Vincent, who, besides inventing the first course of lessons, had originated the "Berean Series," was bent, first of all, upon uniting his own denomination, the Methodist, in the use of it; but, by its intrinsic and conspicuous excellence, was fast giving to it an *extra-denominational* and national character. It was easier to see what his Church would lose than what it might gain by the proposed change. It was, indeed, a very critical juncture.

The turn which the Sunday-school history of the world has taken since that time was then trembling in the balance of almost a single will. But the good providence of God, to whose inspiration all that was good in the movement was due, was not to let the undertaking go by default. "Failure" was not to be the word.

Mr. Lyon, one of the publishers of the "National Sunday-School Teacher," being still in New York at the time, and deeply interested in the matter in a business way, learning from Dr. Eggleston what had been done by the committee, or that portion of the committee which had acted, immediately telegraphed Mr. Jacobs, at Long Branch, that the committee had decided not to agree, and that Dr. Vincent had gone home to Plainfield. Mr. Jacobs telegraphed the same evening to Dr. Vincent to meet him in New York the next morning, saying, also, that the plan must not fail. Mr. Lyon, calling at Mr. Jacobs' office in New York the next morning, showed him the card printed the night before, and asked what was to be done? Mr. Jacobs replied: "It must be recalled, and the committee must do its work." They went together to Dr. Vincent's office, and awaited his arrival. After an hour's discussion Dr. Vincent wrote and signed the following card, which was subsequently signed by Dr. Eggleston and Mr. Jacobs, and sent to the papers which had received the first.

The undersigned desire to recall the circular forwarded yesterday, entitled "Uniform Lessons—The Failure." We desire to state that, having reconsidered the whole subject, we have agreed upon a series for 1872. Will you accommodate the committee by withholding the publication of the former circular? A list of lessons for 1872 will be forwarded soon.

EDWARD EGGLESTON,

J. H. VINCENT,

B. F. JACOBS.

They separated to meet after lunch at Dr. Eggleston's office. On the way down Mr. Jacobs met Mr. M'Cook, who had spent the night near by, and had returned to the city. Together they went to Dr. Eggleston's office, where Dr.

Vincent and Mr. Lyon soon arrived. Another discussion ensued, Mr. M'Cook declining any part in going forward with the work, and Mr. Jacobs insisting that the committee were appointed to do a specific work, and not to discuss whether it should be done, and they had no right to decline to proceed.

Dr. Newton not having returned to the city, the other members of the committee, except Mr. M'Cook, made the selection of lessons for 1872, and, after many delays, the experiment was tried.

THE FORMAL DECISION AT INDIANAPOLIS.

The time, at length, was ripe for the inauguration of the movement. A multitude of converging tendencies and concurrent causes at last, in the good providence of God, were furnished the fit and needed occasion for being compacted into one. This was afforded by the National Sunday-School Convention, held at Indianapolis, April 16-19, 1872.

In a number of respects it was an extremely delightful and valuable meeting; but the one fact which imparts to it its historic importance relates to the formal adoption of the plan of the National Uniform Lesson. It was well understood beforehand that this question would be the one of predominant interest. The profound solicitude concerning it was almost universal. Abundant opportunity was given for the freest discussion. Not many times has any deliberative body in America witnessed a nobler debate. In spirit, manner, method, and convincing power, several of the arguments made were of surprising felicity, power, and real eloquence. No one who was present can ever forget the scene.

Dr. Eggleston, himself a member of the committee, thus wrote in the "National Sunday-School Teacher" for October, 1872:—

THE UNIFORM LESSON.—At last the experiment is to be tried. We are to have a uniform lesson for the leading publishers in the country. This is the culmination of the movement of which the success of this magazine was the beginning. We are not very sanguine about the ultimate success of entire uniformity. Charles V. tried to make two clocks run together, and failed. It is said that this failure led him to see the folly of his former course in trying to make people think alike. The interests involved in Sunday-school publishing are various; and these will lead to diversity. The leading Sunday-school men are men of strong character, and men of strong character are apt to see things very differently.

It is only weak men that can move compactly on any question not vital. We are not sure but that the opinions on the subject of lessons are so deep-seated and fundamental that we shall never be able to make a course for three or four years together, which shall combine all parties. We fear that denominational jealousies, publishing rivalries, and, above all, the strong honest differences of opinion among Sunday-school men, will pull the lessons apart again. We are doubtful whether the Sunday-school public will not demand a greater variety of lessons. This, we know, is the opinion of many leading Sunday-school men, who are, like ourselves, willing to give the plan a fair trial. Whether it succeeds or not in the end, the experiment cannot fail to do good. It brings us together for a year, and it will bring many of the old foggy schools on some course of lessons.

The moral effect will be so good that the arrangement may come to be permanent. But, whether permanent or not, the moral effect will be excellent. We vote for the cross of the Legion of Honor to B. F. Jacobs. He is the original Jacobs, to whose tireless persistency, vehement urging, unruffled and imperturbable good-nature, and general faculty for having his own way, we are indebted for the present consummation. The amount of energy he has expended, the amount of opposition he has braved, the amount of tact he has shown in carrying his point,

are greater than can be imagined by those who have not seen the conflict. Strong, earnest, vehement, sometimes brusque in advocating his point, Mr. Jacobs is yet one of the sweetest, purest, and most self-denying of Christians. We think this is a proper time to record our appreciation both of his faith and works.

The subject was brought forward, in the shape of a resolution, by Mr. B. F. Jacobs. From the admirable report of the Convention, made by Mr. I. Newton Baker, (who has reported all the recent conventions,) a few extracts must be made:—

Mr. B. F. Jacobs, of Illinois, was called to open the discussion of the topic of the session, "The Uniform System of Sabbath-school Lessons for the Whole Country." "I desire," he said, "to divide this subject, and to answer, first, as far as possible, the question, *Why* such a course of lessons is desirable, for the Sunday-schools of this country not only, but, blessed be God! we hope, for the world! that it will not only be a national series, but that it will come to be an international series; and, secondly, *how* this result may be obtained; and I suggest that the one answer to the first question is, that it will promote a more thorough study of the word of God. We need no other answer. We need no other reason." The points made by him were that this would be true (1) for the *scholars*; (2) for the *teachers*; (3) for the *parents*; (4) for the *pastor*; and (5) for the *writers of lessons*. He said: "We have, moreover, the assurance of its having been inaugurated and carried forward by the Holy Spirit himself. In proof of which, we submit that this plan was born. It was not made. The beginning was but a feeble thing compared to what it has now reached. As all things must truly live that truly grow, so this thought grows with the hours that roll round. There are no men that have any right to special honor in this matter. Thank God! it is all his." The resolution submitted by Mr. Jacobs was as follows: "That this Convention appoint a committee, to consist of five clergymen and five laymen, to select a course of Bible lessons for a series of years, not to exceed seven, which shall, as far as they may decide possible, embrace a general study of the whole Bible, alternating between the Old and New Testaments, semi-annually or quarterly, as they shall deem best, and to

publish a list of such lessons as fully as possible, and, at least, for two years next ensuing, as early as the first of August, 1872; and that this Convention recommend their adoption by the Sunday-schools of the whole country, and that this committee have power to fill any vacancies as they may occur in their number, by reason of the inability of any member to serve.

Dr. Eggleston followed. His position on the question was regarded with interest. Many supposed him to be in favor of the scheme, since he had had no little to do with some of the practical steps by which the movement had grown into such popular favor. He did not allow the convention to remain long in doubt. His first sentence defined his position. *He represented the minority.* He said: "It seemed to him that something must have frightened some of his brethren. They were certainly thought, not long ago, *to be at least doubtful.* Were they overawed by the enthusiasm of the hour? Had they yielded to the high pressure of that incarnated steam-engine of a man, Jacobs, who was accustomed to carry every point which he had set his mind and heart upon? It cost the speaker something to breast the tide, and to move in the teeth of the wind and current that had set in so strongly on this question. Heretofore he had been with the majority on the great questions of Sunday-school progress. But was that progress? Nay. It was a movement backward. How was the matter of uniformity brought about for this year? *Did not the committee,* after careful deliberation, decide that it was not deemed best to adopt it? And did they not so announce? But the indomitable Jacobs coming up from Long Branch, before all the members of the committee had separated, in utter defiance of the decision they had rendered, determined that they must reverse it, and in some way succeeded in the determination." [Cries of "Good for Jacobs." Laughter and applause.] "Well, the matter reminded him of Thomas Jefferson's mill. He built a wind saw-mill once on the top of a mountain, located it so that the wind would play upon it from every direction. He spent a good deal of money on it, and rather prided himself on the original design and plan, which were all his own. 'What do you think of my mill?' he asked of a mill-wright who visited him. 'Well, since you have asked me, Mr. Jefferson, I suppose I must tell it. It is all very well as a mill, but I don't see how you are going to get the lumber up to it to saw,'

‘O’ exclaimed Jefferson, ‘I never thought of that.’ Mr. Jacobs’ plan presents just this practical difficulty; it is going to be exceedingly hard to accomplish it. The inevitable tendency of this slavish uniformity will be to a more exclusive use of the lesson than before, and the denominations will not be brought any nearer together, but will really be taken further apart.” The speaker recognized the fact in closing that the vote was a foregone conclusion. “He knew that he was on the unpopular side. Still, he owed it to himself to utter his protest and stand by his conviction.”

J. H. Vincent, D.D., taking the floor, said: “A year ago he opposed the scheme of national uniformity. To-day he was thoroughly converted to the other side. [Applause and clapping of hands.] So completely converted that, although his denomination was now in the sixth year of the Berean System, proposing to cover the entire Bible in seven years, they were ready to break every stereotype plate, abandon their selections, and begin *de novo* on the broadest platform. [Great applause.] He believed in unity, he believed in uniformity, and he believed in variety in uniformity. He believed in the good old-fashioned sun that shines in the heavens, and he loved the lily and the rose, in which its light and heat were developed in different forms. He believed in the one good old book, but he believed also in the one lesson taken from it, and taught, on the same Lord’s day, in ten thousand Sunday-schools of the land, though there might be as great variety in the development of that one lesson as there was in the tints of the lilies and the roses. As to driving the schools into denominational lesson systems, and interfering with independent and union systems, the fact was, that the American Sunday-School Union, for example, never did begin the lesson system until after the Churches had taken hold of it; and the fact is, too, that many teachers in all the Churches are taking all the lesson preparations, and they will continue to take all they can lay their hands on, and there will be as great variety as there ever has been.”

Rev. George A. Peltz, of Pennsylvania, resumed the discussion. He began by a very happy allusion to his “conversion” on this question, after a “protracted meeting” with his Brother Vincent, who “labored” with him until midnight, and saw him profess conversion before retiring. But during the night he had “fallen from grace,” and had to be “con-

verted again" by his Brother Vincent in the morning. He was now soundly converted on the question, at least as to the principles involved. He believed, first, in the one grand old text-book. He believed, secondly, in uniformity in a single school. He believed, thirdly, in a great curriculum, covering the Bible. In the single school the principle is admitted to be good. How far shall schools be associated with it? The advantage of numbers, in the added strength and variety of talent and in the power of sympathy, can be easily seen. Denominational uniformity can be secured without doubt; but can the matter be carried to the extent of national co-operation, including all the denominational and undenominational schools of the land? This was still a question in the speaker's mind. He was, at any rate, thoroughly in favor of giving it a trial.

Mr. B. F. Jacobs again briefly spoke upon the question. Unbelief, he called the brethren to notice, was the main objection that had as yet been urged by the opposition. They did not believe it was practicable, or could be carried out. "If so and so" were done, which it "was doubtful if it could be," the case would be plainer. He charged the brethren to fling away doubts, and have faith. God means to bless the land through this movement. Let us believe, and work and pray in faith, and it will be done. Two or three incidents were given by the speaker, emphasizing the truth that we were not laboring in this—as we should not labor in any work for Christ—for success, or for reward as an end, but for Christ! There were difficulties in the way of carrying out the plan proposed. But difficulties make men. No school, or church, or man, that has not known difficulties, knows development and growth. What are difficulties, when God says, "Go forward?" The brother speaks of the difficulty of getting the committee together. Why, he knew of a committee of twenty-nine, who gathered in New York city from every part of the country, and every man was there at the appointed hour. And then, to conclude, the matter is not compulsory. It is simply a recommendation, not an inforcement. It is conceived and will be carried out in the spirit of the Gospel. If any do not see their way clear to follow it, the only hope and prayer that will be cherished and uttered by all will be, "God bless you abundantly, and make you a blessing."

Rev. Mr. Foote, of Missouri, before voting, desired first to know the

men to whom this important trust was to be committed, and Mr. Jacobs replied that it was for the Convention, and for Mr. Foote, to say who should serve them. The resolution was read a second time, several questions were asked for information, which Mr. Jacobs satisfactorily answered, and the question being again loudly demanded, the vote was taken by rising. An overwhelming majority voted "aye," and *ten* only voted "nay." William Reynolds, of Illinois, moved the appointment, by the chair, of a committee of five to nominate the committee of ten called for by the resolution. The Convention then with great enthusiasm and unction sang "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and proceeded to other business.

The report of the Convention says:

The interest of the Convention culminated, as was expected, in the uniform lesson question. To this almost every thing seemed to be tending from the beginning of the sessions. The slightest allusion to the subject created a perceptible ripple over the body. And when the question came up in the regular order, an intensity of feeling was exhibited that is rarely seen in a public assembly. At times it reached the morally sublime. After the earnest speech of Mr. Jacobs, who had been appointed to lead the discussion, and during the brief speeches for and against which followed, the scene was indescribable. A quiver of eager desire seemed to thrill the whole body. It was known that a strong feeling in favor of the project was abroad in the Sunday-school community, but the feverish anxiety and solemnly-set purpose of such vast numbers, manifesting itself in such intensity, was hardly expected even by the most ardent and sanguine advocates of the system. There was scarcely a corporal's guard of opponents to the measure. Although in the morning, when the question was broached, repeated cries of "question" were made, the counsel of caution prevailed, and the measure was not rushed through in hot haste, but left for the afternoon's session. The ardor of its advocates had not at all cooled by the delay, the final vote being almost unanimous, and its announcement being greeted by the Convention rising to their feet and singing the long-meter doxology. A committee of five ministers and five laymen from different parts of the United States, with one minister and one layman added

from the Dominion of Canada, were appointed to arrange a series of Bible lessons for a term of seven years, covering a general study of the whole Bible, and the Convention recommended the adoption by the Sunday-schools of the entire country of the series thus planned for.

And so, at last, the project came to be a fact. A national convention appointed a committee to select a seven years' series of national uniform lessons. This committee consisted of J. H. Vincent, *Chairman*; Warren Randolph, *Secretary*; John Hall, Richard Newton, A. L. Chapin, Geo. H. Stuart,* B. F. Jacobs, P. G. Gillett, A. G. Tyng, H. P. Haven. The following gentlemen from Canada were afterward added: J. Munro Gibson, A. Macallum.

With as little delay as possible they entered upon their task. The subsequent history of the movement is well known. If the scheme had proved a failure the responsibility would, by common consent of those familiar with the early facts in the case, have undoubtedly rested upon Mr. Jacobs. If it had turned out a positively injurious failure, widely detrimental to the general progress of Sunday-school interests, it would have been easy to trace the mischief to his mistake, his indiscretion, his rashness and pertinacity, that could take any other hint sooner than a hint to stop before his purpose had been gained. However he came by the idea, it was he who seized it, and was possessed by it, and, with a completely unwavering tenacity and pertinacity of aim, advocated it and planned for its execution, as a field-marshal plans a battle, or rather as a general arranges for a campaign, mastering the situation so thoroughly that he may be said to *know* that the plan, in due time, will suc-

* Mr. Stuart afterward resigned, and J. B. Tyler was appointed in his place.

ceed. If to others it appeared a chimera, to him it seemed as certain to come to pass as a prophecy.

But, as I have before said, a fact of this kind is never the result of a single factor; and, moreover, in many cases there are times when the various concurrent influences are indistinguishably mixed, and other times when, for the moment, they may *seem* to be actually contrarious. That, at least, was true in this matter. But at last all the several confluent streams were mingled in the one irresistible current. The movement, assuredly prompted by the Spirit of God, had acquired a popular sweep and volume and momentum which, when the new scheme was formally announced, began at once to produce an effect that was really revolutionary. The Committee appointed to select the Uniform Lessons for the first Seven Years' Course was extremely well chosen. If there had been personal, or denominational, or business jealousies and rivalries, they were now wholly lost from view. All motives at length, the worldly and the unworldly, combined to urge on the new enterprise. By the Protestant evangelical and non-liturgical Churches throughout the country the proposal was hailed with general enthusiasm. All the distinctively Sunday-school periodicals instantly fell into line. All the leading religious papers, denominational or undenominational, espoused the cause, and some of them secured the ablest and most expert biblical scholars to prepare the weekly analysis, expositions, and application of the lessons. Nor were these "lesson helps" mere bits of "commentaries;" some of them were better than the commentaries, and have done not a little to change the current idea of what the popular commentary ought to be. But a scheme of this kind, which, it was now

seen, was good enough to be "national," would be better yet—so it was believed—if it were made to be *international*. And it was not until this point in its development was reached that the grand Sunday-school idea of our time can be said to have been fully born. As Dr. Vincent wrote in his monthly, "The Normal Class," for June, 1876:—

The conception of a uniform lesson *for the whole country* was, so far as we can see, the fruit of Mr. Jacobs' brain and heart. He proposed it. He pleaded for it. He persevered when denominational and commercial rivalries embarrassed those who were in sympathy with it. He was full of enthusiasm and good-natured persistency. He would not let any man say him nay.

But while Mr. Jacobs was seeking the national idea, Dr. Vincent was already in correspondence with representative Sunday-school men in London and Edinburgh, seeking the realization of the international idea, convinced that if the question of uniformity could only be relieved of its load of denominational difficulties, it would be possible to make the movement on the larger as well as on the national basis. Rev. J. Comper Gray, of Halifax, though pleased with the idea, disapproved of the scheme as impracticable. Under date of January 28, 1870, John Smither, Secretary of Committee on Publications of the "London Sunday-School Union," wrote to Dr. Vincent, stating that "the subject of an international series of Sunday-school lessons" had afforded the committee great pleasure, and "stirred in them a cordial sympathy with your purpose."

Mr. F. J. Hartley, Esq., also of the London Sunday-School Union, wrote, April 30, 1870:—

It is too late for next year's list, though I hope we may be in time for 1872. It would be a glorious thing for the teachers on both sides of the Atlantic to be reading the same lesson Sunday by Sunday, and we would do much to bring it about.

Rev. James Inglis, of Scotland, about the same date, writes:—

Your idea of a grand Protestant scheme is very attractive, and I am not willing to say it is impracticable, though, at present, I don't quite see how it can be carried out.

And he added this very sagacious piece of advice:—

It seems to me that the best means of giving the project a chance of success is not to ask all manner of societies to join in framing a good scheme; but first to sketch a scheme, and then see how many can be got to adopt it, first communicating with as many societies as possible on the subject. Our Edinburgh scheme will be run out by December, and we would be quite ready to consider any better system than we have been following.

It will by this be seen how well the way had been prepared. It should also be noted that, from the first, our Canadian brethren of the Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches were quick to appreciate the new plan, which made the Bible schools in the Churches of all denominations, and in all nations, seem so near of kin!

“THE NATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.”

In tracing the genesis of the Uniform Lesson, I have had frequent occasion to refer to the “Chicago,” now the “National Sunday-School Teacher.” It was in this magazine that the movement was inaugurated. It furnished the fruitful field in which was planted the germ that has grown till the branches of it stretch out into every continent, and drop

their golden fruit into ten thousand Churches at home, and thousands of Churches on which the sun never sets. The origination both of the "Teacher," and of the Periodical "Lesson Paper" was the work of Dr. Vincent, at the outset of his continually progressive Sunday-school career. It was the "Teacher" which took up the Periodical Lesson, and led the way in teaching teachers how to teach it. This, for one year, was done by Mr. Vincent, who, though he withdrew from the editorship of the magazine after the fourth month of its existence, continued to prepare the lessons for the remainder of the year. But it was Rev. Edward Eggleston who for the next five years threw the full force of his genius and enthusiasm into the most enlightened and aggressive forms of Sunday-school enterprise; but, above all, and in order to all the rest, gave himself with wonderful zest and really surprising success to the building up of the "National Sunday-School Teacher," and the development of that kind of systematic periodical lessons which Mr. Vincent had first projected. Dr. Eggleston, through the "Teacher," came so near the first victory in making his own series of undenominational uniform lessons "national," that he assumed the right, and, indeed, with some show of propriety, not to consent to any national uniform system except on condition that the rest should accept, and so make uniform, his own scheme. Whatever may be thought of his attitude then, his intensity, clearness of perception, definiteness, and singular power to impress others with his own progressive ideas, cannot be overlooked, and, in this connection, can hardly be overestimated.

In this connection there is force in a remark lately made by Rev. H. C. Trumbull, in the "Sunday-School Times," of

which he is editor, (clearly the best weekly Sunday-school periodical in existence:) "In 1872 not a single prominent denominational publishing board was at the start in favor of the plan proposed. If those boards had been in conference over the plan they would have decided against it unanimously. *Now* they are all glad that popular sentiment necessitated their adoption of the plan."*

PERPETUITY OF THE PLAN.

Will the plan last always? Perhaps not; nothing in this world is a finality. Every thing depends. The perpetuity of this will depend upon its continued fitness to meet such conditions as shall continue to exist. Only a few serious blunders in the management of committees or in the selection of the lessons might spoil the scheme. If it should ever be found to interfere with the liberty and spontaneity of individual schools, it will pass away. But that will not be yet awhile.

We are now in the seventh and last year of the great experiment. So it may be said that this lesson scheme has been fairly tested. Its success has been beyond all anticipation. But let it be remembered, we climb a stairway whose steps are forever giving way behind us; we must move on. We must presently try something new—something, if possible, still better suited to the ever-new conditions of things in these our universities of religious study.

* For the position of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday-School Union even before 1872, see Appendix, page 87.

THE BEST LESSON SYSTEM.

What the best lesson system would be is a difficult question. The right answer depends partly on the nature of the book which all study, partly upon the nature of the human mind, and partly upon what may be termed the natural history of our schools as we find them at the time.

1. The Bible is a unique book. It is a large book. Though written by many different writers, and composed in every variety of style known to literature, it is, nevertheless, a *divinely systematic* book. It begins from the beginning; it starts with a purpose; it pursues steadfastly one divine plan. The writers, moved by the Holy Spirit, wrote infinitely better than they knew. The subject-matter of it is wide as human history, as far-reaching as God's own scheme of the world. The Bible at best is, as yet, but meagerly understood. The Apostle John "wept much" in his time because no man was found able or worthy to open the book, or to unloose the seals thereof. Jesus Christ, it is true—and the truth is glorious—has himself availed to open the Scriptures, and has begun, by its blessed revelations, to set on fire the heart of the world. The Bible, rightly apprehended, is, in the highest degree, a systematic book. Its revelation is progressive. The true scientific method is nowhere more needed than here. The Bible is composed of the two main divisions, which sustain the relation to each other of part and counterpart. Neither can be well understood apart from the other. Each portion is expository of the others. A true lesson system must, then, combine the carefully adjusted study of both Testaments, the Old and the New. Would it do to wait till we have gone

through the one before entering upon the other? Certainly not. Art is long and life is short. Would it be well to alternate, giving one Sunday to the Old, the next to the New? Hardly; that would be a mechanical arrangement, and would interfere with any real sense of continuity.

It is noteworthy that it was on the *first Sunday of the Christian era* that the *first Sunday-school* was held. And it was, of all others, the model of Bible-class teaching. This was the one which, on the morning of the resurrection, had Jesus himself for teacher, and for scholars the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. Happily, though we do not know the words which the Master used, we are not left in ignorance of the general method which he pursued in opening to them the Scriptures. The effect of it we also know. The sorrowful hearts, in which hope itself had died, became, as the gracious divine exposition went on, irradiated with the light of the great Revelation, the age-long Hope, and began to burn with holy transport in view of its speedy realization. The key to the risen Saviour's lesson system on that occasion is given and is thus expressed: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures *the things concerning himself*." It is this kind of Bible teaching, we need to be again and again assured and reassured, which is to burn its way into the heart of mankind for its healing.

Of our first uniform Seven Years' Lesson System, the arrangements were as follows:—The first year was divided between Genesis and Matthew; the second, between Exodus and Mark; the third, between the period of Joshua and the Judges, and John; the fourth, between the period including Saul and Solomon, and the original organization

of the Christian Church, as recorded in the first twelve chapters of Acts; the fifth, between studies concerning the kingdom of Israel and the missionary career of Paul, as narrated in the latter half of the book of Acts; the sixth, between the kingdom of Judah, including several lessons in Jeremiah and Daniel, and Luke; while the seventh is thought by some to be a somewhat distracted attempt to make the best of the situation, and snatch at so much attention to the remaining portions of the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, Psalms, Prophets, Epistles, and so forth, as can be glanced at in the lessons of a single year.

The scheme may have been the best, on the whole, that we could have had. That it was "plenarily inspired" is more than probably any one would claim for it. The selecting committee have earned, in eminent degree, the gratitude of all the Churches. The harmony of their counsels and the wide unanimity with which their work has been accepted by the Churches, have furnished as signal illustrations of the possibilities of real Christian union, as distinguished from mere ecclesiastical union, as could anywhere be found.

The new committee, chosen at the Atlanta Convention, June, 1878, charged with the duty of selecting the course of lessons for the next Sunday-school epoch, have a task intrusted to them of the utmost sacredness and difficulty. If there are any who need the anointing of the Holy One, the spirit of wisdom, of love, and a sound mind, it is they!

ONE THING MORE.

The idea of uniformity *can* be carried too far. If uniformity, interdenominational, national and international, has its advantages, valuable beyond expression, so, too, have spontaneity, freedom, and individual resource. No doubt the highest wisdom will appear in the skillfully adjusted combination of the two—*uniformity with supplemental variety*. And it may be remarked that here, as elsewhere, Dr. Vincent, who has a way of always facing the morning, has well forecast the next step in the grand alignment of Sunday-school progress. Decidedly the most important suggestion presented and elaborated at the National Sunday-School Convention, at Atlanta, Ga., was that of the "Supplemental Lesson," as set forth in the paper read by Dr. Vincent, and which, in the main suggestion, at least, deserves to receive universal consideration.

The Uniform Scheme is, for the present, and it may be for a long while to come, a grand necessity; but somewhat more and something different is also necessary. The same spirit of restless aggressiveness, of quick, free, constant inventiveness, the same faith and hope, often stirring up to what may seem to many an audacity of new undertaking, will have as much scope and demand during the next ten years as they had ten years ago. The Christian Church is in perpetual crises. An everlasting emergency is upon us.

LESSONS FOR SEVEN YEARS.

 For 1873.

FIRST QUARTER.

GENESIS I-XXVIII.

1. The Creation. Gen. 1. 1, 26-31.
2. In Eden. Gen. 2. 15-25.
3. The Fall and Promise. Gen. 3. 1-8, 15.
4. Cain and Abel. Gen. 4. 3-10.
5. Noah and the Ark. Gen. 6. 13-18.
6. The Bow in the Cloud. Gen. 9. 8-17.
7. Confusion of Tongues. Gen. 11. 1-9.
8. Covenant with Abraham. Gen. 15. 1-7.
9. Escape from Sodom. Gen. 19. 15-26.
10. Trial of Abraham's Faith. Gen. 22. 7-14.
11. Jacob and Esau. Gen. 27. 30-40.
12. Jacob at Bethel. Gen. 28. 10-22.
13. Review of the Lessons.

SECOND QUARTER.

GENESIS XXII-L.

1. Israel—The New Name. Gen. 22. 24-30.
2. The Dreams of Joseph. Gen. 37. 3-11.
3. Joseph Sold. Gen. 37. 28-28.
4. The Lord with Joseph. Gen. 39. 1-6, 20-23.
5. Joseph Exalted. Gen. 41. 37-49.
6. The Report from Egypt. Gen. 42. 29-38.
7. Joseph Makes Himself Known. Gen. 45. 1-8.
8. Joseph Sends for his Father. Gen. 45. 19-28.
9. Israel in Egypt. Gen. 46. 1-4, 29-32.
10. Jacob and Pharaoh. Gen. 47. 5-10.
11. Prophetic Blessings. Gen. 48. 15, 16; 49. 8-10.
12. The Last Days of Joseph. Gen. 50. 15-26.
13. Review of the Lessons.

THIRD QUARTER.

MATTHEW II-XI.

1. The Child Jesus. Matt. 2. 1-10.
2. The Flight into Egypt. Matt. 2. 13-23.
3. The Baptism of Jesus. Matt. 3. 13-17.
4. The Temptation of Jesus. Matt. 4. 1-11.
5. The Ministry of Jesus. Matt. 4. 17-25.
6. The Beatitudes. Matt. 5. 1-12.
7. Teaching to Pray. Matt. 6. 5-15.
8. The Two Foundations. Matt. 7. 21-29.
9. Power to Forgive Sins. Matt. 9. 1-8.
10. The Twelve Called. Matt. 10. 1-15.
11. Jesus and John. Matt. 11. 1-11.
12. The Gracious Call. Matt. 11. 25-30.
13. Review of the Lessons.

FOURTH QUARTER.

MATTHEW XIII-XXVIII.

1. Parable of the Sower. Matt. 13. 18-23.
2. Walking on the Sea. Matt. 14. 22-33.
3. The Cross Foretold. Matt. 16. 21-28.
4. The Transfiguration. Matt. 17. 1-8.
5. Jesus and the Young. Matt. 19. 13-22.
6. Hosanna to the Son of David. Matt. 21. 8-16.
7. The Lord's Supper. Matt. 26. 26-30.
8. Jesus in Gethsemane. Matt. 26. 36-46.
9. Jesus before the High-priest. Matt. 26. 59-68.
10. Jesus before the Governor. Matt. 27. 11-26.
11. The Crucifixion. Matt. 27. 45-54.
12. The Resurrection. Matt. 28. 1-8.
13. Review of the Lessons.

 For 1874.

FIRST QUARTER.

EXODUS I-XVII.

1. The House of Bondage. Exod. 1. 7-14.
2. The Birth of Moses. Exod. 2. 1-10.
3. The Call of Moses. Exod. 3. 1-10.
4. Doubts Removed. Exod. 4. 1-9, 27-31.
5. Jehovah's Promise. Exod. 6. 1-8.

6. The First Plague. Exod. 7. 14-22.
7. Jehovah's Passover. Exod. 12. 21-30, 51.
8. The Exodus. Exod. 13. 17-22.
9. The Red Sea. Exod. 14. 19-31.
10. Bitter Waters Sweetened. Exod. 15. 22-27.
11. Bread from Heaven. Exod. 16. 1-5, 31-35.
12. Defeat of Amalek. Exod. 17. 8-16.
13. Review of the Lessons.

SECOND QUARTER.

EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY.

1. The Ten Commandments. Exod. 20. 1-17.
2. The Golden Calf. Exod. 32. 1-6, 19, 20.
3. The People Forgiven. Exod. 32. 12-20.
4. The Tabernacle Set Up. Exod. 40. 17-30.
5. The Five Offerings. Lev. 7. 37, 38.
6. The Three Great Feasts. Lev. 23. 4-6, 15-21, 33-36.
7. The Lord's Ministers. Num. 8. 5-13.
8. Israel's Unbelief. Num. 14. 1-10.
9. The Smitten Rock. Num. 20. 7-13.
10. The Serpent of Brass. Num. 21. 4-9.
11. The True Prophet. Deut. 18. 9-16.
12. The Death of Moses. Deut. 34. 1-12.
13. Review of the Lessons.

THIRD QUARTER.

MARK.

1. The Beginning of the Gospel. Mark 1. 1-11.
2. The Authority of Jesus. Mark 1. 16-27.
3. The Leper Healed. Mark 1. 38-45.
4. The Publican Called. Mark 2. 13-17.
5. Jesus and the Sabbath. Mark 2. 23-28; 3. 1-5.

6. Power over Nature. Mark 4. 35-41.
7. Power over Demons. Mark 5. 1-15.
8. Power over Disease. Mark 5. 24-34.
9. Power over Death. Mark 5. 22, 23, 35-43.
10. Martyrdom of the Baptist. Mark 6. 20-29.
11. The Five Thousand Fed. Mark 6. 34-44.
12. The Syrophenician Mother. Mark 7. 24-30.
13. Review of the Lessons.

FOURTH QUARTER.

MARK.

1. The Deaf Mute. Mark 7. 31-37.
2. The Evil Spirit Cast Out. Mark 9. 17-29.
3. The Mind of Christ. Mark 9. 33-42.
4. Blind Bartimeus. Mark 10. 46-52.
5. The Fig-Tree Withered. Mark 11. 12-14, 19-24.
6. The Two Commandments. Mark 12. 28-34.
7. Hypocrisy and Piety. Mark 12. 38-44.
8. The Anointing at Bethany. Mark 14. 8-9.
9. The Betrayal. Mark 14. 42-50.
10. The Denial. Mark 14. 66-72.
11. The Crucifixion. Mark 15. 22-39.
12. The Risen Lord. Mark 16. 9-20.
13. Review of the Lessons.

For 1875.

FIRST QUARTER.

JOSHUA.

1. Joshua Encouraged. Josh. 1. 1-9.
2. Crossing the Jordan. Josh. 3. 14-17.
3. Memorial Stones. Josh. 4. 4-9.
4. Preparation for Conquest. Josh. 5. 9-15.
5. Jericho Taken. Josh. 6. 12-20.
6. Achan's Sin. Josh. 7. 19-26.
7. Ebal and Gerizim. Josh. 8. 30-35.
8. Caleb's Inheritance. Josh. 14. 6-15.
9. The Land Divided. Josh. 18. 1-10.
10. The Cities of Refuge. Josh. 20. 1-9.
11. The Altar of Witness. Josh. 22. 21-27.
12. Joshua's Warning. Josh. 23. 11-16.
13. Review.—God's Mercies to Israel. Josh. 24. 1-18.

SECOND QUARTER.

JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH, I. SAMUEL.

1. Israel's Promise. Josh. 24. 14-18.
2. The Promise Broken. Judg. 2. 11-16.
3. The Call of Gideon. Judg. 6. 11-18.

4. Gideon's Army. Judg. 7. 1-8.
5. The Death of Samson. Judg. 16. 25-31.
6. Ruth and Naomi. Ruth 1. 16-22.
7. A Praying Mother. 1 Sam. 1. 21-28.
8. The Child Samuel. 1 Sam. 3. 1-10.
9. The Death of Eli. 1 Sam. 4. 12-18.
10. Samuel the Judge. 1 Sam. 7. 5-12.
11. A King Desired. 1 Sam. 8. 4-9.
12. Saul Chosen. 1 Sam. 10. 17-24.
13. Review.—Samuel's Parting Words. 1 Sam. 12. 20-25.

THIRD QUARTER.

JOHN.

1. The Word made Flesh. John 1. 1-14.
2. Following the Lamb. John 1. 35-46.
3. Jesus at the Marriage. John 2. 1-11.
4. The New Birth. John 3. 7-17.
5. The Water of Life. John 4. 5-15.
6. Jesus at Bethesda. John 5. 5-15.
7. The Bread of Life. John 6. 47-58.
8. Jesus the Christ. John 7. 40-46.
9. Freedom by the Truth. John 8. 28-36.

10. The Light of the World. John 9. 1-11.
11. The Good Shepherd. John 10. 1-11.
12. The Resurrection and Life. John 11. 34-44.
13. Review.—Christ Rejected. John 11. 17-58.

FOURTH QUARTER.

JOHN.

1. Jesus Lifted Up. John 13. 23-33.
2. Washing the Disciples' Feet. John 12. 1-9.
3. Many Mansions. John 14. 1-7.

4. The Vine and the Branches. John 15. 1-8.
5. Friends and Foes of Jesus. John 15. 11-19.
6. The Work of the Spirit. John 16. 7-14.
7. Jesus Interceding. John 17. 15-21.
8. Jesus the King. John 18. 33-38.
9. Jesus on the Cross. John 19. 25-30.
10. Jesus and Mary. John 20. 11-18.
11. Jesus and Thomas. John 20. 24-31.
12. Jesus and Peter. John 21. 15-22.
13. Review.—The Ministry of Jesus.

For 1876.

FIRST QUARTER.

I. SAMUEL, II. SAMUEL.

1. Saul Rejected. 1 Sam. 15. 10-23.
2. David Anointed King. 1 Sam. 16. 1-18.
3. David and Goliath. 1 Sam. 17. 38-51.
4. David in the Palace. 1 Sam. 18. 1-16.
5. David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 20. 35-42.
6. David Sparing Saul. 1 Sam. 24. 1-16.
7. Saul and his Sons Slain. 1 Sam. 31. 1-6.
8. David Established King. 2 Sam. 5. 17-25.
9. The Ark brought to Zion. 2 Sam. 6. 1-15.
10. God's Covenant with David. 2 Sam. 7. 18-29.
11. Absalom's Rebellion. 2 Sam. 15. 1-14.
12. Absalom's Death. 2 Sam. 18. 24-33.
13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School.

SECOND QUARTER.

ACTS.

1. The Ascending Lord. Acts 1. 1-12.
2. The Day of Pentecost. Acts 2. 1-11.
3. Peter's Defense. Acts 2. 12-28.
4. The Early Christian Church. Acts 2. 37-47.
5. The Lame Man Healed. Acts 3. 1-11.
6. The Power of Jesus' Name. Acts 3. 12-26.
7. Christian Courage. Acts 4. 8-22.
8. Christian Fellowship. Acts 4. 23-37.
9. Lying unto God. Acts 5. 1-11.
10. The Apostles in Prison. Acts 5. 12-26.
11. Apostles before the Council. Acts 5. 27-42.
12. The Seven Chosen. Acts 6. 1-15.
13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School.

THIRD QUARTER.

I. CHRONICLES, II. CHRONICLES, I. KINGS, PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES.

1. David's Charge to Solomon. 1 Chr. 28. 1-10.
2. Solomon's Choice. 2 Chron. 1. 1-17.
3. Solomon's Temple. 2 Chron. 3. 1-17.
4. The Temple Dedicated. 1 Kings 8. 5-21.
5. Solomon's Prayer. 1 Kings 8. 22-30.
6. Solomon's Prosperity. 1 Kings 10. 1-10.
7. The Call of Wisdom. Prov. 1. 20-33.
8. The Value of Wisdom. Prov. 3. 1-19.
9. Honest Industry. Prov. 6. 6-22.
10. Intemperance. Prov. 23. 29-35.
11. The Excellent Woman. Prov. 31. 10-31.
12. A Godly Life. Eccles. 12. 1-14.
13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School.

FOURTH QUARTER.

ACTS.

1. Stephen's Defense. Acts 7. 1-19.
2. Stephen's Defense. Acts 7. 35-50.
3. Stephen's Martyrdom. Acts 7. 51-60.
4. Simon the Sorcerer. Acts 8. 9-25.
5. Philip and the Ethiopian. Acts 8. 26-40.
6. Saul's Conversion. Acts 9. 1-18.
7. Saul's Early Ministry. Acts 9. 19-30.
8. Dorcas Restored to Life. Acts 9. 31-43.
9. Peter's Vision. Acts 10. 1-20.
10. The Gentiles Received. Acts 10. 34-48.
11. Spread of the Gospel. Acts 11. 19-30.
12. Peter's Release. Acts 12. 1-17.
13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School.
14. Annual Review, or Selection.

For 1877.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

1. The Kingdom Divided. 1 Kings 12. 12-20.
2. The Sin of Jeroboam. 1 Kings 12. 25-33.
3. Omri and Ahab. 1 Kings 16. 28-34.
4. Elijah the Tishbite. 1 Kings 17. 1-16.
5. Elijah and Ahab. 1 Kings 18. 5-18.
6. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal. 1 Kings 18. 19-29.
7. Elijah and his Sacrifice. 1 Kings 18. 36-46.
8. Elijah at Horeb. 1 Kings 19. 8-18.
9. The Story of Naboth. 1 Kings 21. 4-14.
10. Elijah Translated. 2 Kings 2. 1-12.
11. The Spirit on Elisha. 2 Kings 2. 18-25.
12. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

1. The Oil Increased. 2 Kings 4. 1-7.
2. The Shunammite's Son. 2 Kings 4. 25-37.
3. Naaman the Leper. 2 Kings 5. 1-14.
4. Gehazi the Leper. 2 Kings 5. 20-27.
5. Elisha at Dothan. 2 Kings 6. 8-18.
6. The Famine in Samaria. 2 Kings 7. 12-20.
7. Jehu the King. 2 Kings 10. 20-31.
8. Jonah at Nineveh. Jonah 3. 1-10.
9. The Death of Elisha. 2 Kings 13. 14-21.
10. The Lamentation of Amos. Amos 5. 1-15.
11. The Promise of Revival. Hosea 14. 1-9.
12. The Captivity of Israel. 2 Kings 17. 6-18.
13. Review; (with Nahum 1. 1-18.)

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS.

1. Paul in Cyprus. Acts 13. 1-18.
2. Paul at Antioch. Acts 13. 26-41.
3. Turning to the Gentiles. Acts 13. 42-52.
4. Paul at Lystra. Acts 14. 8-20.
5. The Yoke Broken. Acts 15. 22-31.
6. Paul sent to Macedonia. Acts 16. 1-15.
7. Paul and Silas in Prison. Acts 16. 22-34.
8. Thessalonians and Bereans. Acts 17. 1-14.
9. Paul at Athens. Acts 17. 22-34.
10. Paul at Corinth. Acts 18. 1-11.
11. Paul at Ephesus. Acts 19. 1-12.
12. Power of the Word. Acts 19. 17-28.
13. Paul at Miletus. Acts 20. 17-32.
14. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS.

1. Paul at Cesarea. Acts 21. 8-15.
2. Paul at Jerusalem. Acts 21. 27-39.
3. Paul and the Bigoted Jews. Acts 22. 17-30.
4. Paul before the Council. Acts 23. 1-11.
5. Paul before Felix. Acts 24. 10-25.
6. Paul before Agrippa. Acts 26. 6-20.
7. Almost Persuaded. Acts 26. 21-29.
8. Paul in the Storm. Acts 27. 14-26.
9. The Deliverance. Acts 27. 33-44.
10. Paul in Malta. Acts 28. 1-10.
11. Paul at Rome. Acts 28. 16-31.
12. Paul's Last Words. 2 Tim. 4. 1-8.
13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School.

For 1878.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

1. Rehoboam, First King of Judah. 2 Chron. 12. 1-12.
2. Asa Faithful to his God. 2 Chron. 14. 1-11.
3. The Covenant Renewed. 2 Chron. 15. 8-15.
4. Jehoshaphat's Prosperity. 2 Chronicles 17. 1-10.
5. Jehoshaphat Reproved. 2 Chron. 19. 1-9.
6. Jehoshaphat Helped of God. 2 Chron. 20. 14-22.

7. Joash Repairing the Temple. 2 Chron. 24. 4-18.
8. Uzziah's Pride Punished. 2 Chron. 26. 16-23.
9. Ahaz's Persistent Wickedness. 2 Chron. 28. 19-27.
10. Hezekiah's Good Reign. 2 Chron. 29. 1-11.
11. Hezekiah and the Assyrians. 2 Chron. 32. 9-21.
12. Manasseh Brought to Repentance. 2 Chron. 33. 9-16.
13. Review; or, Misalqnary or Temperance Lesson.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

1. Josiah's Early Piety. 2 Chron. 34. 1-8.
2. The Scriptures Found and Searched. 2 Chron. 34. 14-22.
3. Jeremiah in Prison. Jer. 38. 1-9.
4. The Rechabites. Jer. 35. 12-19.
5. The Captivity of Judah. Jer. 52. 1-11.
6. The Captives in Babylon. Dan. 1. 8-17.
7. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream. Dan. 2. 36-45.
8. The Fiery Furnace. Dan. 3. 21-27.
9. The Handwriting on the Wall. Daniel 5. 22-31.
10. Daniel in the Lion's Den. Dan. 6. 14-23.
11. Messiah's Kingdom. Dan. 7. 9-14.
12. The Decree of Cyrus. 2 Chron. 36. 22-23.
13. Review; or, Missionary or Temperance Lesson.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

1. Birth of Christ the Lord. Luke 2. 8-20.
2. The Childhood of Jesus. Luke 2. 40-52.
3. Ministry of John the Baptist. Luke 3. 15-22.
4. Jesus at Nazareth. Luke 4. 16-30.
5. The Draught of Fishes. Luke 5. 1-11.

6. The Centurion's Faith. Luke 7. 1-10.
7. The Widow of Nain. Luke 7. 11-17.
8. The Friend of Sinners. Luke 7. 40-50.
9. Return of the Seventy. Luke 10. 17-24.
10. The Good Samaritan. Luke 10. 30-37.
11. Importunity in Prayer. Luke 11. 5-13.
12. Warning against Covetousness. Luke 12. 13-23.
13. Review; or, Missionary or Temperance Lesson.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

1. Warning against Formalism. Lu. 13. 22-30.
2. The Gospel Feast. Luke 14. 15-24.
3. The Prodigal Son. Luke 15. 11-24.
4. The Rich Man and Lazarus. Luke 16. 19-31.
5. The Ten Lepers. Luke 17. 11-19.
6. Whom the Lord Receives. Luke 18. 9-17.
7. Zaccheus, the Publican. Luke 19. 1-10.
8. Judaism Overthrown. Luke 21. 8-21.
9. The Lord's Supper. Luke 22. 10-20.
10. The Cross. Luke 23. 33-46.
11. The Walk to Emmaus. Luke 24. 13-32.
12. The Saviour's Last Words. Luke 24. 44-53.
13. Review; or, Missionary or Temperance Lesson.

For 1879.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. The Second Temple. Ezra 3. 1-13.
2. The Dedication. Ezra 6. 14-22.
3. The Mission of Nehemiah. Neh. 2. 1-8.
4. The Builders Interrupted. Neh. 4. 7-18.
5. The Reading of the Law. Neh. 8. 1-8.
6. The Keeping of the Sabbath. Neh. 13. 15-22.
7. The Way of the Righteous. Psalms. 1. 1-6.
8. The King of Zion. Psalms. 2. 1-12.
9. The Prayer of the Penitent. Psalms. 51. 1-13.
10. The Joy of Forgiveness. Psalms. 32. 1-11.
11. Delight in God's House. Psalms. 84. 1-12.
12. The All-seeing God. Psalms. 139. 1-12.
13. Review; or, Lesson Selected by the School.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. Sanctified Affliction. Job 33. 14-30.
2. Prosperity Restored. Job 42. 1-10.

3. Queen Esther. Esth. 4. 10-17.
4. The Coming Saviour. Isa. 42. 1-10.
5. The Suffering Saviour. Isa. 53. 1-12.
6. The Saviour's Call. Isa. 55. 1-11.
7. The Saviour's Kingdom. Micah 4. 1-8.
8. The Holy Spirit Promised. Joel 2. 28-32.
9. Prophecy against Tyre. Ezek. 26. 7-14.
10. The Valley of Dry Bones. Ezek. 37. 1-10.
11. The Need of God's Spirit. Zech. 4. 1-14.
12. Consecration to God. Mal. 3. 8-18.
13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. Peace with God. Rom. 5. 1-10.
2. The Security of Believers. Rom. 8. 28-39.
3. Christian Love. 1 Cor. 13. 1-13.
4. Victory over Death. 1 Cor. 15. 50-53.
5. Ministry of Reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5. 14-21.

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| 6. The Fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5.22-26; 6.1-9. | 3. The Triumphs of Faith. Heb. 11.1-10. |
| 7. The Christian Armor. Eph. 6. 10-20. | 4. Faith and Works. James 2. 14-26. |
| 8. The Mind of Christ. Phil. 2. 1-13. | 5. The Perfect Pattern. 1 Pet. 2. 19-25. |
| 9. Practical Religion. Col. 3. 16-25. | 6. The Perfect Saviour. 1 John 1. 1-10. |
| 10. The Coming of the Lord. 1 Thess. 4. 13-18. | 7. The Love of the Father. 1 John 4. 7-16. |
| 11. The Christian in the World. 1 Tim. 6. 6-16. | 8. The Glorified Saviour. Rev. 1. 10-20. |
| 12. The Christian Citizen. Titus 3. 1-9. | 9. The Message to the Churches. Revelation 3. 1-13. |
| 13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School. | 10. The Heavenly Song. Rev. 5. 1-14. |
| | 11. The Heavenly City. Revelation 21. 21-29; 22. 1-5. |
| | 12. The Last Words. Rev. 22. 10-21. |
| | 13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School. |

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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| 1. Our Great High-Priest. Heb. 4.14-16; 5.1-6. | 12. The Last Words. Rev. 22. 10-21. |
| 2. The Types Explained. Heb. 9. 1-12. | 13. Review; or, a Lesson Selected by the School. |

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ABSTRACT OF DR. VINCENT'S ADDRESS.*

There are four questions involved in the theme announced—"The International Lesson:"—(1.) The uniform selection used in *each school*; (2.) The uniform selection in *all the schools of a particular denomination*; (3.) The uniform selection in the schools of all denominations *in one country*; (4.) The uniform selection in *all the schools of Christendom*.

In America these questions are all intimately related, and I shall not attempt in the present discussion to draw the line too carefully between them.

The International Lesson System in America may be pronounced a great success.

1. It is there used by 7,700,000 officers, teachers, and pupils.
2. Whenever a vote has been taken on the subject at conventions, the almost unanimous verdict has been in its favor.
3. Although we have worked the system for five years, there is to-day no organized opposition.
4. The late International Convention adopted, without a dissenting voice, a resolution calling for the continuance of the system for a second term of seven years.
5. The enthusiasm which all who use the system seem to feel in regard to it is an unanswerable argument in its favor.

The following are some of the advantages of the system:—

1. It has increased the *influence of the Bible* over our people. It has *advertised* the Bible; has led to its wider *use*; has increased the popular *knowledge* of its contents; has exalted it as the only *standard* of faith and practice, and has promoted the *love* of the Book among the people.
2. It has increased the influence of *other religious agencies*.

The Sunday-school is not the only agency responsible for the religious education of children. *Home* is worth more than Sunday-school, and the International Lesson System, by engaging parents and children in the study of the same subject each week, increases the power of the family.

In the same way the power of the *pulpit* is increased. The more people know about the Bible the more are they interested in preaching.

The *press*, religious and secular, has been utilized to a remarkable degree in furnishing helps to teachers and pupils in the line of the lessons.

* Delivered in London in June, 1878.

The *devotional meetings* of the Church are also enriched by the uniform lessons. Pastors employ it in the quickening of thought and fervor among the church members.

3. It has increased the influence of *true educational philosophy and methods in the Church*.

The laws of the intellect in religious teaching are the same as those observed in secular culture. Wise teachers who follow the best educational methods are, other things being equal, the teachers best qualified to promote biblical training. The International System has exalted the *teaching* work in the school; has driven teachers to the study of educational principles and examples; has led to general schemes and outlines of biblical study; has set parents and teachers at work teaching children at home and elsewhere during the week; has instituted that plan of Bible study which takes up great characters and events, and makes them centers of thought and investigation; has increased the intellectual power of plain men in the Church; has led young and scholarly men to appreciate the higher intellectual standards, and has tended to connect biblical and scientific study. The one great text-book has thus increased the power, the teaching power, of our Sunday-schools.

4. It has increased *the influence of true catholicity and of international fraternity*.

The race has had its Babel; but the race has had its Pentecost. We are now under the dispensation of Pentecost. By all denominations studying the same subject we come to see the truth from many stand-points. We are surprised to find in how many particulars we agree, and in how few we differ. This unity is greatly needed, in view of the present power of Romanism, Rationalism, and worldliness.

Objections are made to this Lesson System:—

1. It is said that "the teaching in our Sunday-school to-day is superficial." So it is; but do not let us forget that the teachers of to-day are the products of the old, and not of the new, system. The seven years' course, if continued long enough, will lead to a profitable repetition of the lessons, so that a child of five years entering the Sunday-school will, at the age of twelve years, have gone over the Bible; at the age of nineteen will have gone over it twice; at the age of twenty-six will have three times studied the word from Genesis to Revelation.

2. It is said that by this system "we do not have enough formulated doc-

trine." But we *do* have God's own word, the foundation of all doctrine. This is the beginning. After God's word, man's definition. The Catechism and Creed may be studied in Sunday-school, and the International System will not interfere.

3. "But the lessons are not adapted to primary classes." Primary teachers say just the opposite of this. We have one text-book for all—old and young. The Bible is a stream where a bird may sip and an ox wade.

4. *The International Lesson System, by using "Leaves," crowds out the Bible itself.* But more Bibles are used than ever. Every "leaf" is an advertisement of the Bible, a guide to the Bible, a part of the Bible. A class studying the New Testament is really studying the Bible, even though Genesis and Malachi are absent.

5. *The present Lesson System discourages the memorizing of Scripture.* Not at all. It leads to the study of Bible history on scientific principles, so that pupils acquire a knowledge of it just as they study secular history. It requires the memorizing of the Golden Text, and emphasizes the devotional portions of the Bible as proper matter to be hidden in the memory in the exact language in which it is given in the Book.

6. *It is only a sentiment.* So be it. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." It promotes unity among God's people in doctrine, and spirit, and works.

THE CHAUTAUQUA IDEA.

But the actual success of the Lesson System demanded the concurrence of some specially favoring conditions. The resolution of a convention, however enthusiastically it might be voted, was not enough. The scheme was yet on trial; its general and lasting acceptance would depend upon how it worked. With the adoption of the Lesson System a new conviction and impulse, of noiseless but prodigiously effective power, flashed, as it were, clear across the sky from the west even unto the east, that the new Lesson Scheme, if it were to meet the high expectations of it, must have given it *better teaching*. But how to insure this was the next labor and the real task.

And here, again, there was brought into requisition all the fresh-minded wisdom and genius for methods and management, and personal faculty for bringing things to pass, which the most fortunate might possess. Institutes, conventions, lectures, had their place and were good, and had abundantly attested their usefulness; but there was a necessity for some new and more signal and more systematic instrumentality. Moreover, the Sunday-school, in its new era of development, needed to have given it the prestige of the manifested interest of the best people in the land, the foremost Christian scholars, thinkers, philanthropists, reformers. Nothing could be too good for it to have.

Some ten or a dozen years ago there used to be considerable talk at conventions and elsewhere about the endowment, somewhere in the land, of a kind of "National Sunday-school University." The notion was not a bad one. It was, to be sure, crude and impracticable, as then enter-

tained; but it was a good sign. It showed that thoughtful people felt the great want, and were not looking wholly in the wrong direction.

It was in 1874 that what for convenience may be termed the Chautauqua plan was originated. It was not an institute, or convention, or assembly, or picnic, or camp-meeting, merely, but all these in one, and something more—making it, in the highest sense of the term, a real school. The hint of it was first suggested by Mr. Lewis Miller, of Akron, O., and was matured and carried into effect by Dr. J. H. Vincent. The project was popular from the start. Chautauqua is the name of a particularly delightful lake in western New York. The main circumstances which render a camp-meeting attractive were provided for here. A plan of normal class study was studied out with extreme care. A numerous force of distinguished ministers, scholars, thinkers—men and women known to have something to say, and the ability to say it so as to command attention—were secured as instructors and lecturers. From the first the attendance has been large, the enthusiasm general and deeply practical.

The institution has grown in completeness of arrangements and real power each year. A multitude of similar enterprises in various sections of the country have been started—as at the Thousand Islands; Clear Lake, Iowa; Lake Bluff, Illinois; Loveland, and Lakeside, Ohio, and elsewhere, and conducted more or less successfully, although none have rivaled in wealth of interest the one at Chautauqua. The new and growing fashion of out-door summer resorts, with the best features of the religious camp-meeting, were first of all brought into requisition. But the purpose of erecting a *school* was placed at the front. The Bible

was, of course, to be made the central text-book. Yet nobody in these days reads the Bible alone. God's universe is a unit, and religious knowledge has close relations to all the other great forms of knowledge. All the sciences are inter-related. The immense popular impulse given to scientific inquiry and speculation, which has deeply affected the minds of almost every one who reads or thinks at all, has created an entirely new condition of things for the Sunday-school teachers to meet. Among all classes of people, among children even, the thinking of our time is full of pungent questionings and doubts. These must be fairly met. They cannot be met by ignoramuses. They must be anticipated and answered beforehand, by the discriminating, wide-seeing wisdom of the explanations and investigations given in the Sunday-school. The teacher must know a hundred things in order to teach one thing rightly. The broad relations and correlations of all the sciences, including that of religion, must be, even popularly, understood. To this end teachers need to have given them, by men who are masters in their several departments, an outlook in all directions, upon all the great forms of knowledge and thought. And this is precisely what is aimed at by the Chautauqua idea, in all these midsummer schools.

It is true, the yearly session lasts but for two or three weeks; but the influence of it penetrates the whole year. If little but beginnings seem to be made, beginnings, let us remember, are not to be despised. Indeed, the chief promise and potency of such an institution, or system of institutions, may consist in just this: In hundreds and hundreds of susceptible minds beginnings of study, of reflection, aspiration, inquiry, self-discipline, will be started—beginnings

of tendencies and courses the results of which no eye can fully trace or measure. As Joseph Cook has justly remarked concerning Chautauqua :—

Within the same amount of time there are no undergraduate populations in our colleges that have an equal opportunity for intellectual *stimulus*, and none that have an equal chance for being furrowed through all their fields by the plowshares that open the heart to God's seed of piety.

There is a unique concurrence of circumstances favorable to the greatest mental profit. Not that it takes the place of academy, college, or seminary: it does not; but it does supplement them. The school itself is an advertisement of a great want—the want of that power which comes only of larger knowledge and riper discipline. Those who attend are certainly quite up to the average intelligence and brightness; they come to learn; the excitements of novelty and of social stimulus put them in a high degree of mental animation; the lecturers and their topics are chosen with reference to a plan which marks progress each day. While some will, no doubt, prove indifferent enough, many will, in these few days, gain more decisive enlightenment and power than during the year besides, and there will almost certainly be, each year, some rarely endowed natures, who will be self-discovered, and apprehended by new impulses and secret resolves to which hitherto they have been strangers, and who will be entered upon a course of eminent usefulness. But, after all, the way in which the greatest benefit is likely to accrue to the Sunday-schools of the country will come about indirectly.

The Chautauqua idea means the necessity for better things in all Sunday-schools; the possibility, the entire practicability, of an immense improvement, on the part of teachers generally, in their qualifications for teaching. Let a few

thousand Sunday-school teachers each year, scattered over twenty or thirty States, associated together in these wisely-considered courses of instruction and outlined plans for systematic home-readings through the year, get started toward these better attainments, and how the glorious impulsion will tend to multiply itself and draw others into the same way, rescue them from aimless frivolities and vanities, and set them upon their best endeavors! To quote again from Mr. Cook:—

There is here a hopeful endeavor to bring to a focus all truth that has a religious bearing, whether it is biblical or scientific, and to hold up in the heat of that focus all the indifference of the average Church member to the performance of his duties to the vast population of America. This institution at Chautauqua, could it be imitated from side to side of the land, would save America, not merely from small philosophy and from small politics, but from most other parts of our long and dismal list of indigenous small things.

“Chautauqua” stands for what is freshest, wisest, most intelligent, comprehensive, and inventive in modern Sunday-school effort. Not that it has ever realized all that it has aimed at, by any means; but it has at all events done this: it has pointed the public attention to what our Sunday-schools must be—something variously and vastly better than now they are.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL A CENTER OF VARIOUS AGENCIES.

Coincident with the complete development of the Sunday-school in the origination and the inauguration of the Lesson System, has been the multiplication of the agencies and influences which center about it. Every good institution should be made to subserve as many legitimate uses as possible. Whatever is done to enable the Sunday-school to do,

in the best way, its own distinctively religious work, does not end with that alone. What the schools need, teachers and scholars alike, and supremely, is spiritual culture and the baptism of the Holy Spirit; but they need, also, and sorely need, more intellectual culture, more social culture, greater fullness of knowledge, and a broader *outlook*.

True Bible study always tends to quicken the intellect as well as the conscience. The truth that sanctifies and makes free brings the breath of spring and summer sunshine to every faculty of the soul. If, with all the advantages now of our national and international lesson system, the Sunday-school progress should suffer arrest of development, it would be a grievous fault. And this will happen if some other things are not also re-enforced and systematized in connection with it. Religion contemplates not only one faculty, but all the faculties; not one day in the week, but all days; not one part of life, but all parts and relations of it. And so the Sunday-school is the natural center of a whole circle of cognate associations and agencies, all ministering to the main result.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL AND REFORMS.

Even the most Christian countries abound in wrongs to be righted. Reformation is always in order. No one thing can effect every thing. No one agency—not even that of the Church—can accomplish all. The temperance reformation, for instance, is one of appalling urgency; and it must be urged on by a combination of many agencies and a variety of methods. Stray, spasmodic efforts usually turn out bitterly disappointing. There is as much necessity for formation as of reformation, and this must begin with the young.

It is astonishing, when one thinks of it, how really narrow in its range of vision and definite endeavor the average Sunday-school has been. One of the best features of the "Chautauqua Idea," so called, is the prominence given to the department of reforms. It is a cheering fact that all the popular midsummer Sunday-school assemblies give marked attention to this subject. Not that great and obvious results follow immediately; that is not the case. The effect is rather that of a grand advertisement. The attention of the Sunday-school public is arrested and turned directly to those specific and terrible evils in society for the removal of which the Sunday-schools are so largely responsible.

"C. L. S. C."

The permanence of the present Lesson System depends, of course, upon how it works; and that will depend a great deal upon the manifold intelligence and cultivation of those who work under it. The pleasant-sounding legend, "C. L. S. C.," stands for the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. The plan of it was conceived a year or so ago. It was, after mature consultation, organized this last season, 1878. The design of it is to utilize existing Sunday-school organizations in the promotion of associated, systematized effort for broader mental cultivation. It contemplates a distinct outline and course of reading, with a view to future examinations. The center of this Circle is Chautauqua; or, for convenience, for the present, Dr. Vincent himself, who has planned and started it. Its circumference is a very broad one, reaching at least across the continent from east to west. Whereto it may grow in fact cannot be certainly predicted. Some, the

less wise, smile at it incredulously; others smile because of it, deeply delighted at the interest which it indicates, and confident that good will come of it. It may, indeed, overshoot what is practicable, and so fall short of the fond dreams of some. And yet do not the wisest of philosophers bid us cherish sacredly even the dreams and visions of our youth? The scheme, as presented and explained by Dr. Vincent, at Chautauqua, last August, looks eminently reasonable and desirable. It is not pretentious. It does not pretend to take the place of academy, college, or any other form of school. It does not expect to "work wonders." It is no short-cut highway to an education. It begins by assuming that no one thing can accomplish every thing. Not all can go to college; most cannot go. But it does not follow from this, that all the rest must be debarred all generous outlook upon the wider realms of being and of knowledge. Literature, science, art—they all own the Christian religion as their favoring mother; nor has it any occasion for disowning them. The river of the water of life, it must never be forgotten, springs from the Throne; but it should not be overlooked, either, that along the stream, as it goes flowing on, are the trees of life, on either side, bearing *all manner of fruit*, and ripening at *all seasons* of the year. This fact is justification enough of these associations, like that of the "C. L. S. C.," which seek to associate so naturally these good things with the one thing which is best of all.

This proposed plan of home reading and examinations is novel, and well worthy of careful attention. It surely is one which has vastly interesting considerations in its favor. The plan, when suggested by Dr. Vincent, greatly interested the poet Bryant. The following letter, addressed to

Dr. Vincent, and written only a few days before his death, will be read with peculiar interest, both from its being one of the latest utterances of a man whose memory all Americans delight to honor, and on account of the scheme about which he gives his views with characteristic discrimination and wisdom:—

NEW YORK, *May 13, 1873.*

MY DEAR SIR: I cannot be present at the meeting called to organize the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, but I am glad that such a movement is on foot, and wish it the fullest success. There is an attempt to make science, or a knowledge of the laws of the material universe, an ally of the school which denies a separate spiritual existence and a future life—in short, to borrow of science weapons to be used against Christianity. The friends of religion, therefore, confident that one truth never contradicts another, are doing wisely when they seek to accustom the people at large to think and to weigh evidence, as well as to believe. By giving a portion of their time to a vigorous training of the intellect, and a study of the best books, men gain the power to deal satisfactorily with questions with which the mind might otherwise become bewildered.

It is true that there is no branch of human knowledge so important as that which teaches the duties that we owe to God and to each other, and that there is no law of the universe, sublime and wonderful as it may be, so worthy of being fully known as the law of love, which makes him who obeys it a blessing to his species, and the universal observance of which would put an end to a large proportion of the evils which affect mankind. Yet is a knowledge of the results of science, and such of its processes as lie most open to the popular mind, important for the purpose of showing the different spheres occupied by science and religion, and preventing the inquirer from mistaking their divergence from each other for opposition.

I perceive this important advantage in the proposed organization, namely, that those who engage in it will mutually encourage each other. It will give the members a common pursuit, which always begets a feeling of brotherhood. They will have a common topic of conversation and

discussion, and the consequence will be that many, who if they stood alone might soon grow weary of the studies which are recommended to them, will be incited to perseverance by the interest which they see others taking in them. It may happen, in rare instances, that a person of eminent mental endowment, which otherwise might have remained uncultivated and unknown, will be stimulated in this manner to put forth unexpected powers, and, passing rapidly beyond the rest, become greatly distinguished, and, take a place among the luminaries of the age.

I shall be interested to watch, during the little space of life that may yet remain to me, the progress and results of the plan which has drawn from me this letter. I am, sir,

Very truly yours,

W. C. BRYANT.

APPENDIX.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AND "UNIFORM LESSONS FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY."

As indicating the attitude of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as early as 1870, toward the proposed Lesson System, the following Report of the Special Committee, appointed June 20, 1870, is especially significant:—

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON UNIFORM LESSONS.

The undersigned, appointed June 20, 1870, by the Normal Department Committee, to represent our Sunday-School Union in the matter of uniform Sunday-school lessons, respectfully reports:—

1. The following notice was immediately published in the "Christian Advocate," the "Methodist," and the "Sunday-School Workman:—

"UNIFORM SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY.—At a meeting of the Normal Department Committee of the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on Monday, June 20, the subject of a uniform Sunday-school lesson for the whole country having been brought before the committee, the following resolutions were adopted:—

"*Resolved*, 1. That the further consideration of our Berean Lesson List for 1871, already announced to the public, be postponed four weeks, to afford an opportunity for consultation with committees from other Sunday-School Unions and organizations, in reference to a uniform course of Sunday-school lessons for all the denominations in 1871.

"2. That the Rev. J. M. Freeman, of our Normal Department, (P. O., Jersey City, N. J.,) be a committee to represent the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church in such consultation."

2. The Corresponding Secretary sent the following circular to all persons and publishers, East and West, who were known to have anything to do with the preparation of Sunday-school lessons:—

"805 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, *June 27, 1870.*

"DEAR SIR: You have a right to say something in reference to a Series of Lessons for 1871. Will you appoint a committee to represent your interests in this matter?

"You will see below the action of the Normal Department of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday-School Union.

"Address your reply to this communication to

"Rev. J. M. FREEMAN, Jersey City, N. J."

3. To this notice and circular replies were received from the Rev. G. D. Matthews, of the United Presbyterian Church; I. Newton Baker, Esq., editor of the "Sunday-School Times;" J. Findlay Smith, editor of the New York "Sunday-School Missionary Union;" and J. W. M'Intyre, of the "American Sunday-School Worker," St. Louis.

4. In addition to the circular, Dr. Vincent also addressed a note to the firm of Adams, Blackmer, & Lyon, of Chicago, publishers of the "National Series of Lessons," and a personal note to C. G. Lyon, Esq., a member of the firm.

5. Your committee called a meeting of all the parties interested for Tuesday, June 26, at 3 o'clock P. M., at the office of the "Sunday-School Worker," 71 Broadway.

6. Meanwhile Dr. Vincent received from Mr. Lyon the accompanying note, inclosing an editorial which is to appear in the Chicago "Teacher" in September, and which note and editorial are appended as a part of this Report, and read as follows:—

"LESSONS FOR 1871.—We announced, one year ago, that the lessons for 1870 would be upon *The Life of Jesus the Christ*, and that the lessons for 1871 would be upon *The Words of Jesus the Christ*. The present course is now drawing to a close, and we are glad to announce that it has been more successful than we hoped. The great success of our course, and its adoption by other publications, has excited the most lively hopes of a uniform course for the country. Those periodicals that have given lessons on the subjects of the 'National Series' have all prospered. We have freely allowed the use of our list. In no other case, perhaps, has a successful periodical shown so much liberality toward competing publications. We have freely given our list for the sake of uniformity. We shall give the use of it as freely in the future. But to those who propose any concession on our part that looks toward the submitting of our list to any committee, or conference of 'unions' or private publishers, we have only to say, it is asking too much. This magazine has achieved its success as a private enterprise. It has entered on lines of work untraveled before. Committees and conferences are timid and compromising. We should jeopard the success of our cause in forsaking the ideas upon which it has grown. With charity toward all, we stand by our colors.

"The list will be ready for sending out by the time this number is in the hands of our readers. It is at this writing (in July) in type, and, after a thorough revision, it will be definitely announced. The list of subjects is full of interest, including as it does the divine parables of our Lord. We shall not object if this list is used by all the Sunday-school periodicals in the country. We shall, then, it is true, lose some subscribers who take the 'Teacher' now for the sake of village or city uniformity, who would then prefer denominational papers. But we are willing to enter the field in friendly competition with our contemporaries, asking no other advantages than such as we may or may not be able to gain by superior excellence in the lessons. We hope to introduce greater improvements in the 'Teacher' next year than ever before."

"CHICAGO, July 22, 1870.

"DEAR BROTHER VINCENT: Your letters of the 18th just at hand, and I hasten to reply. I cannot come to New York to attend your meeting, nor do I deem it necessary. Our position is well known to you and the leading Sunday-school men of the country. We see no reason for leaving the ground we took in the April number of the 'Teacher.' If uniformity is so desirable, it can be secured by adopting the National Series of Lessons. The

'Teacher' was first in the field—has a larger number using its lessons than any other publication—and it seems to me that other publishers of lessons ought not to expect us to come to them, but they should at once adopt our course. It is the *only way* in which uniformity can be secured.

"Our Course of Lessons was announced about one year ago. The list of topics is now nearly ready for sending out. Mr. Eggleston is in New York. If he is prepared to submit the list to the pastors at the meeting on the 26th, we are willing. I inclose a short editorial, which will appear in the September number of our magazine. This editorial defines our position fully.

"Hoping you may have a pleasant meeting, and agree upon the wisest and best thing to be done, I am,
Yours sincerely, C. G. LYON."

7. The meeting was held July 26, according to appointment. The following brethren were present: The Rev. Alfred Taylor, editor "Sunday-School Workman;" S. W. Clark, editor "Sunday-School Blackboard;" Mr. Garrigues, one of the publishers of the "Sunday-School Times;" Mr. Baker, one of its editors, and Mr. Thompson, who prepares its lessons; Mr. Browner, of the "New York Sunday-School Missionary Union," and your committee. The Rev. Dr. Niceols, who was to have represented Mr. M'Intyre, of the "Sunday-School Worker," St. Louis, sent a note stating that he could not be in New York before Thursday, the 28th.

8. There was no formal organization made of the brethren present, but a free conversation was had for about an hour and a half. There was a general feeling of regret at the course pursued by the "Teacher" and its publishers. It was instantly seen that self-respect prevented any acceptance of the proposition made to adopt the "National Series." It was then proposed by several of the gentlemen present that we prepare a Union Series independent of the "Teacher," to which your committee replied: 1. That it would have the appearance of opposition and division among Sunday-school men; 2. That such an arrangement would not make a "uniform" lesson, inasmuch as all the publishers of Sunday-school lessons would not be represented in it; and, 3, that your committee had been instructed to arrange for *uniform* lessons, or else to make no union arrangement whatever.

It was thus made apparent that in consequence of the position assumed by Adams, Blackmer, & Lyon, the object for which the meeting had been called could not be accomplished. All the gentlemen present united in expressing to your committee their appreciation of what they were pleased to term the "magnanimity" of the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church in delaying its lessons for the purpose of seeking uniformity, and in taking measures to hold this meeting, and a hope was expressed that good would result from the interview, and that an arrangement might yet be made by which, 1872, we may have a *union*, if not a *uniform*, series of lessons.

All of which is respectfully submitted.
NEW YORK, July 27, 1870.

JAMES M. FREEMAN,
Com. on Uniform Lessons.

ADDRESSES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON SYSTEM.

Rev. Warren Randolph, D. D., at the International Sunday-School Convention, held in Atlanta, Georgia, 1878, as secretary of the Lessons Committee, said:—

Since the meeting of the Baltimore Convention our work of united Bible study has gained many new friends, and has bound in tighter bonds, if possible, the older. Two large denominational publishing houses which then stood aloof from us, one of which could then see “dozens of reasons for doing so,” are now with hearty accord standing with us. The tidal wave of popular sympathy, which was at that time so high, has risen higher and spread wider. In Sunday-school work, at least, we may now say there is no north, no south, no east, no west, but throughout this broad land one blessed fraternity. As one flag is over us, so one Bible binds us. As we go threading our way through the kings and prophets, or bending over Gospel or Epistle, the shout goes up from these bright savannas of the South, and is echoed back from the bleakest hills of New England, “We have found the Messiah!” Blown from the pineries of the upper lakes, and from beyond the Rocky Mountains, we hear a song mingling with that which comes up from along this Atlantic coast, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!” There in the study of this open Bible, which reveals to us a common Saviour, and God, the Father of us all, we are to find for ourselves, for our country, and for all mankind, the principles for a true and lasting reconstruction. We still have the most hearty co-operation with our brethren in Great Britain. The executive officers of the London Sunday-School Union have often surrendered their preferences to ours. For the present year and the next their lessons and ours are identical. In their latest correspondence they express the most earnest desire for continued co-operation, and they and we fondly hope for the time when one series of Bible lessons shall be studied by all English-speaking people. Bible lessons are not extensively studied anywhere on the European Continent, but there are points at which our selections are used in two thirds of the European kingdoms. They have been carried, also, by American missionaries to the farther east—to Syria and India, to Burmah and China. The islands of the South Seas and of the Western Ocean have likewise joined us in our studies, and the day seems nearing when, “from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same,” the Lord’s name will be praised.

Before surrendering our trust, we desire to thank you, not only for the confidence you have reposed in us, but for the enjoyment we have had in the work we have done. We expect no higher enjoyment here on earth. Our

fellowship with each other has been delightful. Mr. Haven wrote the secretary: "Give my love to the holy brethren." One of our number, who has received some of the highest honors of his denomination, and who cannot be at this Convention, writes concerning what he terms our "delightful associations and profitable meetings," and adds, "I count the hours thus spent among the best of my life." Another, who is to-night absent, referring to our now-completed task, adds: "Perhaps in the New Jerusalem we shall all at some time meet to talk over the pleasant work of our Lord we were permitted to do when on earth." If that be so, it will, indeed, be refreshing; but sweeter still will it be to see our divine Lord's approving smile, and to hear from his lips the welcome words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Rev. John Hall, D.D., of New York, on the same occasion, said:

I look back with special satisfaction upon those meetings in Niagara, and in Philadelphia, and in Chicago, and in New York, and in New London, and in Indianapolis. I could close my eyes, and reproduce to my mind's eye the long table around which we sat, the pleasant face of Dr. Vincent at one end of it, the no less genial countenance of him whose words you have just heard, at the other—each man with his Bible before him, and a few additional helps scattered around him—the work intermingled with prayer and praise, and with expressions of the warmest Christian fellowship. I can picture to my mind Mr. Jacobs, of Chicago—whom I am sorry we have not with us here—his irrepressible energy sometimes making it impossible for him to keep his seat. I can see him start up, and make the round of the table in a nervous way, with, perhaps, some lively remark which has flashed some new light upon the subject before us. I do remember one occasion when we had our coats off, but it was because the temperature was exceedingly high in Chicago. But I am bound to say this: I never expect in presbytery or in synod, in assembly or in the Christian Church—I never expect, even at the Lord's table—to have, on earth, a livelier foretaste of the everlasting fellowship of the saints, than I was permitted to enjoy in those successive meetings of my beloved brethren, [applause,] and I cannot but feel that he has caused some of the mutual confidence, some of the mutual affection, some of the mutual considerateness, some of the mutual helpfulness, that he breathed upon us when we met together in those days as disciples of Christ, to flow forth with the work of our hands, and to saturate and leaven to some degree the great army of fellow-laborers who have been teaching these lessons to the multitude of the children and youth in our schools.

If you were to ask me what practical benefits seem likely to flow from these lessons, then I should venture, with your permission, to mention two or three.

First. We have made the Old Testament a real book to the great multi-

tudes of Americans, young and old. Those of you who have ever taken the trouble to look into the works of Chaucer or Shakspeare or of Milton, or even of Burns, who writes in the colloquial language of his country, may remember, in some of the editions, what is called a "glossary," placed at the end of the book, that when you come upon an antiquated word, or an obsolete word, or a word in the Scotch dialect, that you do not understand, you may turn over to the glossary, and find the meaning of it, and so keep yourself from losing the connection, and from losing the sense. But, my dear brethren, have you ever noticed that, with a deeper wisdom and a better arrangement, He who gave us the Holy Bible placed the glossary at the beginning of it, and not only so, but interwove it with the very texture of the narrative, so that as you are following the history of the patriarchs, and the history of God's favored people—as you are studying Leviticus and the stately ceremonials of the Hebrew temple—you are getting the glossary into your head, and learning the meaning of the words with which you are to be familiar all the way through to the close of the book? "Atonement," "reconciliation," "priesthood," "sacrifice," "covenant"—these, and a hundred mighty words, the technical words, the catch-words, the typical words, the significant words of the Scriptures—these you are getting to learn as you read along in the book, from Genesis to the end of the story. And as we give an honest study of the Old Testament we are thus acquiring the power of interpreting the very language in which the blessed New Testament gives us the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Saviour. We have done much to make the Old Testament a *real book* to our fellow-Christians, and to make them understand that we are not to deal simply with the New Testament, to the exclusion of the Old, but that we stand upon one great book, that is a unit in itself, from the beginning to the end, from Genesis to Revelation, and of which our Lord uttered the emphatic words, "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me."

Second. I think, moreover, that we have done a good thing in the tendency of this work. I think that the tendency of this whole international system has been, in a very great degree, to promote true catholicity of feeling between Christians. Let me illustrate the thing to you in the plainest and clearest way that I know. I am preparing, for example, my notes upon a particular lesson, and there is a text in the lesson that has been wont to be considered a fine strong Presbyterian text. As it comes to me, I recall the memories of the Covenanters, and all those stirring associations with which we Presbyterians are familiar; and I proceed to deal with all my heart with this text: and the first thought with me, as a Presbyterian, is to stiffen it as much as possible, and make as much Presbyterianism out of it as I can. But then there comes a sober second thought. "Well, but stay now," I say; "Dr. Vincent will be over that text, and Mr. Trumbull will be over that text, and all my brethren

of all the various denominations will be over that text, and the whole community will have a chance to study what they say, as well as what I say, and if I should squeeze it, or twist it, it is morally certain that my brother will put his finger on the circumstance, and I shall be, as I ought to be, brought to task in the matter. I take it that that is good sense, brethren. I should not think so well of them as I do if I did not believe in the reality of this process of careful scrutiny and criticism. Well, then, I come upon another place where I will surely be inclined to make out that there is just enough water to do the sprinkling properly; and I know perfectly well that, if I am inclined to make too little, my Baptist brother will come out and measure every drop of it! [Great laughter.]

Now, brethren, I do not want you to smile so much as I want you to see how evident it is that the concurrent study of God's word, in this way, is fitted to break down the strong sectarian denominational tendency that we would bolster up by our own interpretation of particular passages of the word, and to constrain us, by the very laws of our mind, to take the Bible as a whole, and to deal with it fairly and justly; and, when we do this, we strike at the very roots of that narrow, unscriptural, bitter, bigoted sectarianism which has its foundation for the most part in an ignorance of God's word. [Great applause.]

Third. I think it must be admitted, also, that the tendency of this system, as has been glanced at in the Report, is to improve in a great degree the character of our pulpit ministrations. May I be permitted to say, for myself, that, whatever may be thought of some of these lessons, the best, many of the most useful, sermons that I have preached to my people during the last five or six years have been sermons upon the lessons, and sermons that expanded and amplified to the people that which I had deliberately and carefully prepared for the instruction of my Sabbath-school teachers. If my brethren in the ministry here do not think it presumptuous in me to say this word to them, I will venture to say it: The best preparation that any man can have for bringing the truth of God's word before the minds of adults is to furnish his own mind so full of the whole subject which he has to lay before his people, that, in the simplest and most conversational way, he can talk it over to the children, and make the children understand it from beginning to end.

Fourth. One other thing, I think, we have in some degree succeeded in doing, and upon that I do not think it necessary to dwell longer than to utter a single sentence. Missionaries have come to me, and taken a place at my table, to talk over the work that they have been doing in distant lands. Naturally, the Sunday-school lesson work has come up prominently in such talks. And more than once these missionaries have said to me something like this: "You living here in America, surrounded by your brethren, in the midst of associations and memories and encouragements to prosecute your work, can

have no idea what help we get from the use of these International Lessons. In the face of the masses of heathenism, solitary and almost alone, a little handful of people, it is such a comfort to us to take these lessons, and feel that, though we be few and feeble there, we are part of a great host scattered all over the world, with our Christian brethren, studying the same lessons, learning the same texts, hearing God's voice speaking to them the same things that he has been pleased to speak to us in our loneliness and desolation." We have done something in this way to give cups of cold water to the disciples of Christ whose hearts many times are weary, whose lips many times are thirsty.

Fifth. And this leads me to mention one other thing, and with the mention of that I leave the subject, dear friends, in your hands. It is not for me to speak more than with the slightest allusion to the past history of these United States. It is not for me to do more than to allude to the wounds that were deep and severe, that, thank God! are now being cicatrized and healed. It is not strange, considering what human nature is, that there should be here and there lingering effects of the great convulsion that once shook this whole land. But we know that all these should be put aside, buried out of sight. If we think of North and South now, let it be in connection with that word of the Bible, "Say to the North give up, and to the South keep not back. Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." [Great applause.] My dear brethren, there is no merit in my being non-partisan. I was not here, not among you, in the midst of that which has now entered into history. On that very account you American people, who have been so kind, who have been so generous and so considerate far beyond anything that any man could have expected, you may forgive me, if, standing where I am, I venture to say to the North and to the South, to New York and New Orleans, to the East and to the West, let us feel that we are *one people*, with the one God, with the one Saviour, with the one English Bible, with the one blessed Protestant system, with the one family training, with the one deep parental love for the little children, and with the one country that we want to keep as one land, that we want to make Immanuel's land! [Great applause.]

From an oration on "Sunday-School Progress," July 4, 1878, by Dr. Clarke, of Albany:—

Since the introduction of the International Lessons the Sunday-school has become the greatest theological seminary in Christendom. Think of the hundreds of thousands of well-educated and pious men and women who are engaged every week in the careful study of God's holy word, with the varied and abundant help furnished by commentaries, and the expositions and illustrations given in religious periodicals and newspapers. Consider how their own minds are profited and enriched by these studies, and their hearts warmed by the

simultaneous contemplation of the precious doctrines and glorious hopes that shine from the sacred page. Consider how they are thus equipped for other services in all departments of Christian work—to aid and lead in prayer-meetings; to perform successfully lay missionary work; or, under the power of entire consecration to God, to step, as Mr. D. L. Moody has, from the Sabbath-school to the platform or pulpit, and wield an influence for truth and righteousness unparalleled in the history of the Church. Before this great theological institution, every day growing greater, in which God himself is the teacher, and over which the Holy Spirit hovers to answer the prayer from any lips, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;" before this institution, with its vast array of students hungering and thirsting after knowledge and righteousness, I stand thrilled with admiration, with gratitude to God, and with hope for the future. I see here a theological institute capable of indefinite enlargement, "without money and without price;" with its doors open to all who will come in and sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him; with its treasures of knowledge, that increase with their distribution and enrich their possessors for time and eternity.

But, in view of the extraordinary growth and magnitude and abundant resources of the Sunday-school institution, as it stands before the world to-day—not a century old, and yet second to no other in Christendom; in view of its numerical strength—seven millions strong in these United States, and as many more in Great Britain and other countries; in view of the wonderful revival of biblical study among teachers and scholars, that is quickening and inspiring with divine truth hundreds of thousands of Christian hearts as they never have been before; in view of what has been accomplished in the prosecution of Christian enterprise by thorough organization, animated by an undying zeal and an unwavering trust in God; in view of the moral condition of the world, the upheaving of nations, accessibility of communities to Christian influence that for ages past have held themselves aloof from the slightest approach of Christ's messengers, and yet who now see the decay and weakness of their own tottering systems; in view of the exceeding great and precious promises that always go before, to guide, sustain, and inspire the hosts of God's elect in every advance movement, we claim that the hour has come for every Sunday-school that has passed from infancy to maturity to consider the privilege and duty of *doing what it can to give the Gospel to the children and youth of the whole world.*

QUESTION BOOKS.

The American Sunday-School Union, Philadelphia, was a union society, representing officially the Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Reformed Dutch Churches. It began the publication of its annual series of "Union Question Books" in 1827. They contained from 125 to 150 pages,

and were sold for $6\frac{1}{2}$ cents a volume. They obtained an immense circulation. In 1840 more than one million six hundred thousand copies had been sold. Some of these Question Books spent the whole year on a single book of the Bible; others followed the life of Christ chronologically, by a "harmony" of the Gospel; several others undertook to go through the Bible, *in course*, taking a certain portion each year. Latterly, answers were given to each question. This was called an "Explanatory Question Book," and was first published in 1869. In no one of these was any *analysis* of the lesson given, other than by the mere "string" of questions. The influence of these, as steps preparatory to what was to come, was, of course, important; yet it cannot be claimed that very much originality and freedom of invention characterized them.

MR. ORANGE JUDD.

Our story of the Uniform Lesson would be defective were it not to mention the significant part taken by Mr. Orange Judd, the singularly sagacious, generous, enterprising publisher of the *American Agriculturist*. The best scheme of Sunday-School Lessons for the year, designed for general use, up to 1862, was the one devised and originated by Mr. Judd. He was aided in this work by Dr. James Strong and Mrs. Dr. Olin. The former drew up for Mr. Judd the scheme of lessons, and wrote for each lesson the "Connecting History" and "Analysis;" while the latter, Mrs. Olin, prepared, with exceeding discernment and tact, the questions. This was clearly the best Question Book hitherto published. At the instance of Rev. Dr. Daniel Wise, then Secretary of the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the book was adopted by that Society, Mr. Judd making a gift of the copyright, although he was offered, the same day, by the agent of the Massachusetts Sunday-School Union, a royalty of 15 per cent., if he would prepare him a similar book. Some two million copies in all of these series of "Lessons for Every Sunday in the Year" were sold during the year 1862-65. As stated on the covers, these were "all arranged in order of time, with a brief connected history or epitome of the entire Old and New Testaments," and "adapted to scholars of all ages," and "in accordance with the views of all denominations." The publication of these ceased after 1865, when, Dr. J. H. Vincent becoming Secretary of the Methodist Sunday-School Union, he substituted his own "Lesson Paper" and scheme of "Berean Lessons," similar to that which previously he had devised and issued in Chicago.

THE END.



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